

**British Columbia Coroners Service**  
**Accountabilities of the Chief Coroner**

**GENERAL**

Pursuant to the *Coroners Act*, all unnatural, sudden and unexpected deaths in the province, the deaths of all children, and the deaths of those in designated institutions, must be reported to, and investigated by, a coroner. The legislation gives coroners wide powers of investigation including the authority to enter and inspect premises, inspect and seize records, take charge of wreckage and require people to provide information on oath or affirmation. Coroners are required to report their findings, in writing to the Chief Coroner.

**REPORTING STRUCTURE**

Emergency Management BC (EMBC) oversees the integrated strategic planning, mitigation, response and recovery activities for the Province, including BC Coroners Service, Integrated Public Safety Unit, Provincial Emergency Program, Office of the Fire Commission, Flood Protection Program and Business Continuity Management Program. EMBC is directed by an Assistant Deputy Minister. The Coroners Service is led by the Chief Coroner, appointed by order of the Lieutenant Governor after a merit-based process. The Chief Coroner reports to the ADM, Emergency Management BC. The ADM, EMBC reports to the Deputy Solicitor General.

**SPECIFIC ACCOUNTABILITIES OF THE CHIEF CORONER**

In order to ensure that:

- death investigations undertaken by coroners in British Columbia are impartial and objective, and free from influence by persons or organizations
- conclusions and recommendations of coroners, juries and death review panels are unbiased
- there are no conflicts of interest or perceptions of conflicts of interest with agencies within EMBC, the Ministry and/or the Government of British Columbia,

it is agreed that the Chief Coroner shall exercise independent authority in all of the following:

- Administer the *Act* and the regulations
- Perform other duties that are assigned to the chief coroner under any other Act or by the minister
- Establish a child death review unit to review the facts and circumstances of child deaths in BC
- Establish panels to review the facts and circumstances of deaths for the purposes of providing advice to the chief coroner respecting matters that may impact public health and safety and the prevention of deaths

- Supervise and direct coroners in the performance of their duties including creating rules of procedure in respect of investigations and inquests;
- Conduct training programs
- Bring the findings and recommendations of coroners, juries and review panels to the attention of appropriate persons, public authorities or the public
- Prepare, publish and distribute manuals and a code of ethics to guide coroners
- Prepare forms to be used in the administration of the Act
- Prepare, publish and distribute materials for the purpose of informing the public respecting prevention of deaths
- Appoint, in accordance with the *Public Service Act*, one or more persons to exercise the powers and perform the duties of coroners
- Delegate to a coroner any of the chief coroner's powers or duties under the Act
- Retain persons as necessary to act as coroner and delegate to those persons any power or duty of a coroner
- Divide the Province into regions and delegate a regional coroner
- Direct that an investigation be made or re-opened
- Direct that an inquest be held
- Allocate delegated resources to meet operational requirements and monitor and control the budget
- Establish the strategic direction of the Coroners Service and develop clearly focused goals in alignment with the objectives of Emergency Management BC and the Ministry
- Provide leadership to staff and maintain a responsive, efficient and cost effective organization that complies with the legislation

#### **SPECIFIC ACCOUNTABILITIES OF THE ADM, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BC**

- Ensure that the specific accountabilities of the Chief Coroner are met responsibly, effectively and efficiently
- Ensure that the specific accountabilities of the Chief Coroner are exercised independently and without fear of bias or influence
- Conduct annual performance reviews of the Chief Coroner
- Ensure that the administrative operations of the Coroners Service are consistent with Ministry and Government financial, administrative and human resources policies

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chief Coroner will exercise independent discretion with respect to the public release of findings of coroners, juries and review panels.

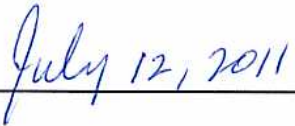
The Chief Coroner will exercise independent discretion with respect to the content and timing of public materials or messaging released for the purpose of informing the public respecting prevention of deaths.

The Chief Coroner will ensure that the ADM, EMBC, the Deputy Solicitor General, and the Minister receive, for information purposes, notice of the public materials to be released informing the public respecting prevention of deaths.

Signed By:



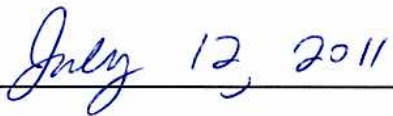
Deputy Solicitor General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General



Date



Chief Coroner, BC Coroners Service



Date