

# News Release



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## Charleston County Coroner's Office Earns International Accreditation

*Charleston County is one of 23 agencies nationwide to secure the certification*

The [Charleston County Coroner's Office](#) has earned the recognition of an international association for its efforts in providing the highest level of service to the citizens, neighbors and visitors of Charleston County. The office received accreditation from the [International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners \(IAC&ME\)](#).

Coroner Rae Wooten will be recognized for this achievement by [Charleston County Council](#) during its next meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Public Services Building, located at 4045 Bridge View Drive in North Charleston.

"I believe that the deceased, and those left behind, deserve to be treated with the utmost compassion and professionalism. This accreditation reflects the commitment and hard work of all those in the Coroner's Office who share these beliefs," said Coroner Rae Wooten.

The IAC&ME's accreditation allows coroner and medical examiner offices to ensure they are conducting business practices and procedures in compliance with international standards. The Coroner's Office voluntarily submitted to this process and was subjected to the review of 288 standards including the review of its administrative, forensic, investigative procedures and its facility. The review also included a site visit by the IAC&ME.

"When an agency elects to subject themselves to this process it clearly indicates their desire to stand to peer review and demonstrates to the public and stakeholders a strong desire to provide excellence in service provision," said John Fudenberg, President of the IAC&ME, who is also the Assistant Director of the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Fudenberg called the Coroner's Office a "dedicated team of well-trained investigators" providing "timely and compassionate investigations of deaths" who are the "voice of those who can no longer speak for themselves."

The accreditation expires in five years. Charleston County's Coroner's Office is now one of 23 counties in the United States accredited by the IAC&ME.

"I am so proud of the Coroner's Office and all the departments in the County that have strived to achieve accreditations from state, national and international associations," said County Council Chairman Elliott Summey. "Charleston County's administration has encouraged every department to raise the bar by receiving more training and raising the standards of excellence in customer service."

The Coroner's Office's duties include but are not limited to:

- Conducting independent investigations into traumatic deaths, sudden or unexpected deaths, suspicious deaths and deaths that occur outside of hospitals or nursing homes
- Documenting, collecting, inventorying, tracking and securing evidence and personal effects
- Ordering autopsies and other procedures when indicated as part of the investigation
- Identifying individuals who have died
- Notifying families when unexpected deaths occur, such as traffic fatalities or homicides
- Determining the manner of death
- Creating of reports related to deaths investigated by the Coroner's Office
- Issuing of burial-removal- transit permits for individuals who have died outside of a hospital
- Providing autopsy reports and coroner's reports to next of kin and agencies when requested or needed
- Releasing personal effects to the next of kin
- Acting as the central depository for all records relative to a death, including the coroner's report, autopsy report, police investigative reports and any other investigative agencies' reports
- Maintaining the County Coroner's Book of Inquisitions
- Conducting inquests when indicated

- Issuing cremation permits, when cremation is the desired means of disposition, for all deaths occurring in Charleston County
- Participating as a member of the Charleston County Disaster Preparedness Team

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