

Overview

Forensic imaging is the undertaking of radiographic images in order to collect evidence to be presented in court, which may include the coroner's or procurator fiscal's courts. It includes the taking of conventional radiographic images and cross-sectional imaging. This standard covers the forensic imaging of individuals who are deceased. The term individuals in this standard applies to both adults and children and young people. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. verify that appropriate authorisation has been given by the appropriate authority for imaging of the deceased
2. ensure that confidentiality is maintained in relation to the present case under judicial consideration
3. apply appropriate precautions for infection control and other appropriate health and safety measures
4. undertake post-mortem imaging using the available imaging modality
5. take account of the post-mortem changes that occur at various stages and adapt protocol and radiographic technique accordingly
6. use appropriate cross-sectional imaging protocols optimised for post-mortem imaging
7. note indications, signs of significance and preserve evidence which may assist to determine the cause and/or factors contributing to fatality
8. identify post-mortem changes present on radiographic images
9. apply correct procedures to maintain continuity of radiographic evidence from the start of the examination to its use in the court
10. ensure that correct procedures are followed to maintain standards of digital evidence
11. ensure that all necessary documentation is completed for the forensic radiographic examination
12. produce written statements and contemporaneous notes that adhere to legal requirements
13. record, collate and prepare appropriate information, documentation and images for transfer or storage according to local protocols

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role, the role of others in your organisation and the activities being carried out
2. the relevant national and local standards, guidelines, policies, procedures and evidence-base that are available and how and when they should be accessed
3. the legal requirements for radiographic images to be used in court
4. the legal requirements for standards of digital evidence
5. continuity of evidence, including authenticity and integrity of evidence, throughout the forensic radiographic examination
6. the national guidelines for forensic radiographic imaging and how to implement these locally in forensic practice
7. the documentation and processes required to maintain continuity of evidence
8. the legal requirements of a written statement and contemporaneous notes
9. the requirement for appropriate authorisation for forensic imaging purposes
10. the present case under judicial consideration in relation to forensic radiographic imaging
11. how to give evidence in court and the roles of expert witness, professional witness and witness
12. the role of the coroner/procurator fiscal in the investigation of deaths
13. the roles and responsibilities of the external agencies and health care practitioners in establishing a cause of death
14. how forensic radiographic imaging is used in the investigation of deaths of individuals
15. the role of post-mortem angiography and pulmonary ventilation in investigation of deaths
16. health and safety requirements for post-mortem imaging
17. infection control requirements for post-mortem imaging
18. the psychological aspects of forensic imaging and the impact this may have on those involved in imaging of the deceased
19. signs and symptoms of stress and how to minimise the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder on individuals

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20. how to communicate with colleagues and agencies involved in the process of forensic imaging under current judicial consideration
21. the limitations of your own knowledge and experience and the importance of operating within your scope of practice
22. the medico-legal justification for the referral for forensic imaging
23. the radiographic techniques for imaging post-mortem individuals
24. image interpretation in relation to forensic imaging, cross-sectional imaging and post-mortem appearances on forensic images
25. the imaging modalities utilised in identification of the deceased for cause of death and identification purposes
26. how to keep full, accurate and clear records in line with organisational procedures

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External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):
Dimension: HWB6 Assessment and Treatment Planning

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