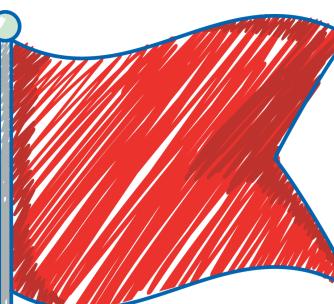


386 Oregonians died from domestic violence related homicide between 2013 and 2024. Nearly a quarter of women who seek help or services for domestic violence report previous suicidal ideation or acts. Unfortunately, in some cases, what appears to be a suicide, accident or overdose of a known victim of domestic abuse was actually a homicide. **These misclassified deaths are referred to as “Hidden Homicides.”**

Between 2020 and 2024, at least three Linn County women died under these circumstances. As a result of the effective advocacy of their families, LC 64 will be introduced in the 2026 session to improve investigation of suspicious deaths involving known victims of domestic violence or child abuse. The bill is based on Joanna’s Law (CA SB 989), a law passed unanimously by the California Legislature in 2024. That law, and LC 64, center around 10 Red Flags that signal a need for careful investigation to determine if the death was a homicide.

LC 64 proposes changes to the death investigation process in these 4 key areas when red flags are present. Details are included on the reverse side of this page.

INVESTIGATIONS & AUTOPSIES
NOTIFICATIONS
ACCESS TO INFORMATION
INDEPENDENT REVIEW



10 Red Flags of Hidden Homicide

- The person’s death was premature or untimely.
- The death scene suggests suicide, overdose or accident.
- The deceased person or their partner wanted to end the relationship.
- The deceased person has a history as a victim of domestic violence or coercive control.
- The person is found dead in a home or place of residence.
- The person’s body is found by the partner.
- The victim’s domestic violence history includes strangulation or suffocation.
- The person was last seen alive by the partner, the child of the decedent or the child of the partner.
- The partner had control of the scene of death before law enforcement arrived.
- The person’s body has been moved from the location where death occurred or the scene of death or other evidence appears altered.

Key Provisions of LC 64, “Hidden Homicide”

INVESTIGATIONS & AUTOPSIES



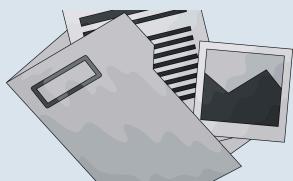
- Requires interviews of family members with relevant information about child abuse or domestic violence when at least three “red flags” are identified.
- Requires investigator to make written request for an autopsy when there is reasonable basis to suspect the death may be the result of homicide or related to domestic violence or child abuse.
- If the medical examiner receives a written request from the death investigator, or finds that at least three red flags exist in the case, an autopsy must be performed.

NOTIFICATIONS



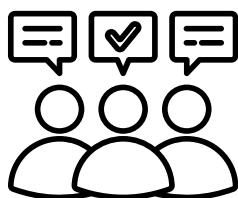
- The following information must be provided to **known family** of the person that died when an investigation is opened into a suicide, overdose or accident:
 - How to obtain evidence or records.
 - How to request an autopsy.
 - How to request an inquest by the District Attorney.
- If the person that died was **previously identified as a victim of abuse**, the information must be provided to:
 - At least one parent, adult sibling or other adult family member of the person who died that was not the alleged perpetrator of the prior abuse.
 - Upon request, to any family member of the person who died that was not the alleged perpetrator of the prior abuse.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION



Clarifies existing Oregon law allowing specified persons to obtain copies of the medical examiner’s report, the autopsy report or any lab report ordered by a medical examiner to explicitly include access to photos and videos associated with the death investigation and/or autopsy.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW



- If the death investigation is closed without a finding of homicide, the family may seek an independent review of the cause and manner of death at their own expense. Relevant evidence and records requested for this purpose must be released by the medical examiner and any law enforcement agency without delay.
- Records are not required to be released while the investigation is ongoing or if release would compromise an existing investigation.

CHILDREN



Includes specific provisions related to the investigation of a death that appears to be a suicide, overdose or accident of a child that is known to be a victim or suspected victim of child abuse by the parent or caregiver that discovered the body or had control of the death scene.

For more information, to sign on as a sponsor or to add your logo to the endorsement sheet, please contact the office of Senator Sara Gelser Blouin at sen.saragelser@oregonlegislature.gov.