

MEDICAL EXAMINER WORKLOAD STATISTICS 1996-2011

The Medical Examiner Department investigates all violent, sudden and unexpected, and unattended deaths. Additionally, Medical Examiner investigation and approval is required before a body is cremated, buried-at-sea, anatomically dissected, or removed from the State. In 2011, of the 9,847 deaths that occurred in Hillsborough County, 8016 (81.4%) were referred to the Department.

Table 1 summarizes the manner of death statistics for investigations conducted by the Department.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF YEARLY STATISTICS 1996-2011

YEAR	ACCIDENT- NON- TRAFFIC	ACCIDENT- TRAFFIC	HOMICIDE	NATURAL	SUICIDE	UNDETERMINED	FETAL	TOT.
2011	565	205	78	938	190	32	3	2011
2010	616	216	90	852	155	32	3	1964
2009	603	206	68	900	199	14	5	1995
2008	527	268	90	879	188	22	5	1979
2007	549	218	87	925	172	27	0	1978
2006	501	269	75	857	184	28	1	1915
2005	455	291	65	838	144	23	5	1821
2004	449	252	73	865	144	21	3	1807
2003	411	282	89	878	154	13	1	1828
2002	384	306	87	846	146	23	3	1795
2001	339	236	75	902	158	10	8	1728
2000	277	254	95	909	147	21	6	1709
1999	272	270	74	857	155	20	8	1656
1998	241	266	89	933	122	18	1	1670
1997	241	240	78	834	134	9	5	1541
1996	190	244	83	870	131	4	7	1529

Table 2 provides an analysis of the workload of the Department. The following explanation of the data should aid in understanding the information:

- 1) Of the 2011 statutory investigations conducted by the medical examiner in 2011 (see table 1), 1759 included direct examination of the body. 1210 of these examinations included full autopsies.
- 2) An additional 549 bodies were examined externally - to exclude trauma. Extensive medical histories permitted a death certificate to be issued without performing an autopsy.
- 3) 6257 other deaths were referred to the medical examiner to obtain approval for cremation, anatomical dissection, burial-at-sea or removal from the State; or to determine whether statutory jurisdiction existed. These investigations were conducted by inquiry without examination of the body.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF WORKLOAD 1996-2011

YEAR	AUTOPSIES	BODIES VIEWED BUT NOT AUTOPSIED	OTHER REFERRALS: CASES INVESTIGATED BY INQUIRY ONLY	TOTAL REFERRALS
2011	1210	549	6257	8016
2010	1219	503	6214	7936
2009	1226	547	6243	8016
2008	1312	482	6024	7818
2007	1434	408	5649	7491
2006	1428	411	5597	7512
2005	1465	333	6092	7890
2004	1394	407	5579	7380
2003	1334	484	5363	7181
2002	1288	490	5179	6957
2001	1274	454	5270	6998
2000	1287	422	5227	6936
1999	1268	388	4951	6607
1998	1270	400	4797	6467
1997	1142	372	4536	6050
1996	1097	432	4584	6113

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF UNCLAIMED⁽¹⁾ BODIES WORKLOAD 2002-2011

YEAR	BURIALS	CREMATIONS	ANATOMICAL DONATIONS	INVESTIGATIONS RESULTING IN PRIVATELY FUNDED ARRANGEMENTS	TOTAL REFERRALS
2011	14⁽²⁾	701	0	108	823
2010	0 ⁽²⁾	584	0	118	702
2009	1 ⁽²⁾	673	0	177	851
2008	1 ⁽²⁾	554	1	238	794
2007	84	470	0	264	818
2006	74	374	1	256	705
2005	86	321	4	250	661
2004	104	306	0	277	687
2003	92	291	0	258	641
2002 ⁽³⁾	116	268	1	244	629

- (1) Florida Statute §406 uses the term “unclaimed” to mean a dead body that no family member, friend, or other legally authorized person assumes financial responsibility for the burial, cremation, or other disposition of the remains.
- (2) Beginning in October 2007, with the exception of a small number of deaths – to include unidentified bodies, the BOCC mandated disposition of unclaimed bodies by cremation.
- (3) The Florida Legislature added the disposition of unclaimed dead bodies as Part II of the Medical Examiners Act (FS §406) in 2002.