



## WHAT WE DO

The Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is responsible for investigating deaths resulting from criminal violence, accident or suicide; that occur suddenly, when in apparent good health; when unattended by a physician; in custody; or occurring in any suspicious or unusual manner. The Office also investigates deaths where an application for cremation is made. The Office provides additional forensic services, including DNA testing, to support criminal investigations. The Office also manages all functions of the City mortuary, including the retrieval and processing of deceased bodies; assistance with autopsies; and body preparation for City burial.

## FOCUS ON EQUITY

The OCME has always been equitable in its treatment of New Yorkers. In an effort to provide greater service to those who may not be able to afford certain funerary rites, we have a decedent viewing policy for those who place their loved ones in the City Cemetery. The OCME also serves as the independent pathologist to families with valid concerns who cannot afford to hire a consultant when they have suspicions over cause of death.

## OUR SERVICES AND GOALS

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### **SERVICE 1 Perform the processes necessary to certify deaths falling within the agency's jurisdiction.**

- Goal 1a Respond promptly to scenes of reportable fatalities and conduct related investigations.
- Goal 1b Perform autopsies and examinations necessary to issue timely death certificates.
- Goal 1c Provide timely investigation for all cremation requests.

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### **SERVICE 2 Provide mortuary services to the City.**

- Goal 2a Recover and transport decedents to City mortuary facilities in a timely manner.

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### **SERVICE 3 Respond to disasters and emergencies when fatalities are involved.**

- Goal 3a Provide rapid response and safe fatality management services to the City.
- Goal 3b Identify victims of disasters and return their remains to families in a timely manner.

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### **SERVICE 4 Provide DNA services to the City for forensic purposes.**

- Goal 4a Provide timely and accurate DNA laboratory services for criminal justice purposes.

# HOW WE PERFORMED IN FISCAL 2015

## SERVICE 1 Perform the processes necessary to certify deaths falling within the agency's jurisdiction.

**Goal 1a** Respond promptly to scenes of reportable fatalities and conduct related investigations.

In Fiscal 2015, OCME took jurisdiction in 7,136 cases, consistent with the 7,109 it handled in the previous year. The OCME responded to death scenes in a median time of 1.9 hours in Fiscal 2015, up slightly from the time of 1.8 hours in Fiscal 2014.

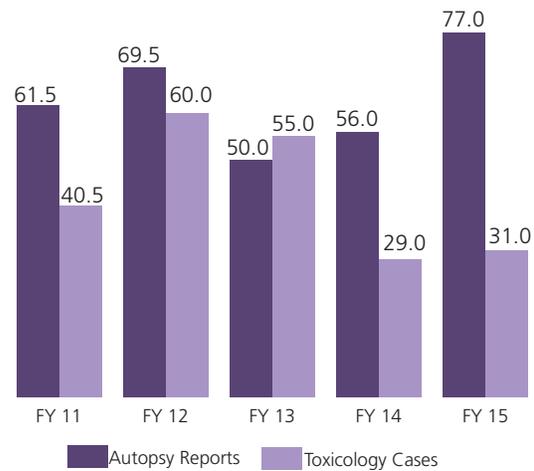
Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
★ Median time for scene arrivals by medicolegal investigators (MLIs) (hours)	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.7	Down	Up
Deaths reported	26,503	25,941	27,265	27,505	27,984	*	*	Neutral	Neutral
Cases where Chief Medical Examiner takes jurisdiction	7,114	7,152	7,095	7,109	7,136	*	*	Neutral	Neutral

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ shows desired direction

**Goal 1b** Perform autopsies and examinations necessary to issue timely death certificates.

OCME performed 4,960 autopsies in Fiscal 2015, a slight decrease from the 5,176 performed in Fiscal 2014. The median time to complete OCME autopsy reports in Fiscal 2015 was 77 days, a 38 percent increase from 56 days the previous year. Final, completed autopsy reports require the compilation and synthesis of all related laboratory studies, such as toxicology, histology, microbiology and molecular genetics. The ongoing reengineering and updating of toxicology and histology processes related to autopsy had an anticipated increase in report completion time in Fiscal 2015. The increase also reflects a change in what is measured as report completion. An OCME autopsy report is now not termed complete until it is scanned into a database, a new step that increased report completion time. OCME does the autopsy itself promptly, to collect the most valid data, then issues the death certificate, so that it is available for funeral or other needs.

**Autopsy Report and Toxicology Case Completion (median days)**



Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
★ Median time to complete autopsy reports (days)	61.5	69.5	50.0	56.0	77.0	51.0	60.0	Down	Up
★ Median time to complete toxicology cases (days)	40.5	60.0	55.0	29.0	31.0	25.0	45.0	Down	Down
Median time to complete toxicology DUI (driving under the influence) cases (days)	16.0	15.0	14.0	20.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	Down	Up
Median time to complete toxicology sexual assault cases (days)	21.0	30.5	27.0	27.0	43.0	17.0	17.0	Down	Up

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ shows desired direction

**Goal 1c**

Provide timely investigation for all cremation requests.

In Fiscal 2015, OCME responded to 15,358 cremation requests, an increase of five percent from the previous year. The median time for OCME to process cremation requests in Fiscal 2015 was 184.5 minutes, up 36 percent from Fiscal 2014. OCME implemented new quality control and tracking requirements to the cremation request process that extended related investigation times during implementation in Fiscal 2015. OCME expects to reduce its time for cremation request response and keep it below three hours, the national practice, in order to facilitate family funeral plans.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Median time to process cremation requests (minutes)	69.0	78.6	123.9	136.0	184.5	90.0	180.0	Down	Up

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ ↑ shows desired direction

## SERVICE 2 Provide mortuary services to the City.

**Goal 2a**

Recover and transport decedents to City mortuary facilities in a timely manner.

In Fiscal 2015, the median time required to remove a decedent from a non-hospital scene after investigation was 49 minutes, an increase of 23 percent from Fiscal 2014. This increase reflects the sizable increase in the number of decedents OCME transported from death scenes in Fiscal 2015 and its measures to improve the security of decedents it handles and accuracy of the information related to them. The OCME implemented more stringent quality assurance requirements in Fiscal 2015 for its Medical Examiner Transport Teams (METT) and Mortuary staff with respect to body check-in and storage protocols. While the new protocols improve accuracy and the security of decedents, they can require some more time than recent past procedures, which resulted in somewhat longer time at base before METT returns to the field for additional cases. OCME has made several changes to address this time increase and related metrics, such as supplying additional computers to its forensic pathology centers and improve accuracy and efficiency of decedent handling there. Also, reorganization of its forensic pathology operations has enabled OCME to have an additional METT vehicle in the field, increasing capacity to respond to death scenes and in-hospital death cases.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Number of decedents' remains transported and stored by OCME	9,714	9,558	7,803	6,976	10,721	*	*	Neutral	Neutral
Median time to remove decedents from scene (non-hospital) after investigation (minutes)	54.6	55.2	42.1	40.1	49.3	*	*	Down	Down

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ ↑ shows desired direction

## SERVICE 3 Respond to disasters and emergencies when fatalities are involved.

**Goal 3a** Provide rapid response and safe fatality management services to the City.

The OCME responded to one major disaster in Fiscal 2015, involving a gas explosion in the East Village. The two disaster victims were recovered and identified by the OCME within three days.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Remains recovered following a disaster or mass fatality incident (cumulative)	21,818	21,818	21,906	21,914	21,916	*	*	Neutral	Neutral

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ shows desired direction

**Goal 3b** Identify victims of disasters and return their remains to families in a timely manner.

The OCME continues to identify remains of the victims of the 9/11 WTC attacks, and succeeded in identifying 223 remains of 9/11 victims in Fiscal 2015. The OCME will continue this effort on behalf of the City until all recovered remains are identified and returned to their families.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Remains identified following a disaster (cumulative)	12,810	13,024	13,639	13,979	14,202	*	*	Up	Up

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ shows desired direction

## SERVICE 4 Provide DNA services to the City for forensic purposes.

**Goal 4a** Provide timely and accurate DNA laboratory services for criminal justice purposes.

OCME showed improvements in most of its forensic DNA testing indicators in Fiscal 2015. The median time to complete DNA homicide cases, from evidence submission to report, decreased to 62 days from 100 days in Fiscal 2014. The median time to complete DNA sexual assault cases decreased to 50 days from 59 days in Fiscal 2014. However, the median time to complete DNA property crime cases, from evidence submission to report, rose to 188 days from 119 days in Fiscal 2014, reflecting the need of OCME to prioritize gun cases and other serious crimes against people, but is expected to be temporary. The reduction in completion times for DNA homicide and DNA sexual assault cases in Fiscal 2015 primarily resulted from improved processes OCME implemented throughout its DNA laboratory during the year, after thoroughly examining and analyzing the procedures there. OCME will work to continue to improve its DNA laboratory processes and reduce completion times for all types of cases received, with the aim of achieving a 30-day turnaround time for all DNA cases in FY 2016.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Median days to complete analysis of a DNA case	83.0	88.0	138.0	92.0	92.0	75.0	30.0	Down	Neutral
★ Median time to complete DNA homicide cases, from evidence submission to report (days)	114.0	111.0	161.0	100.0	62.0	90.0	30.0	Down	Down
★ Median time to complete DNA sexual assault cases, from evidence submission to report (days)	27.0	46.0	89.0	59.0	50.0	50.0	30.0	Down	Up
★ Median time to complete DNA property crime cases, from evidence submission to report (days)	65.0	68.0	139.0	119.0	188.0	70.0	30.0	Down	Up
DNA matches with profiles in database	1,629	1,791	1,618	2,621	6,008	*	*	Neutral	Up

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ shows desired direction

## AGENCY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Customer Experience									
Completed customer requests for interpretation	469	202	164	188	304	*	*	Neutral	Down
Letters responded to in 14 days (%)	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	*	*	Up	Neutral
E-mails responded to in 14 days (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	*	*	Up	Neutral

## AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual					Plan <sup>1</sup>		5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16	
Expenditures (\$000,000) <sup>2</sup>	\$62.6	\$60.9	\$64.8	\$65.8	\$76.3	\$75.8	\$64.4	Up
Revenues (\$000)	\$39	\$92	\$67	\$77	\$41	\$100	\$100	Neutral
Personnel	606	582	583	556	569	676	673	Neutral
Overtime paid (\$000,000)	\$1.9	\$2.5	\$3.0	\$2.8	\$2.1	\$2.1	\$2.0	Up

<sup>1</sup>Authorized Budget Level "NA" - Not Available in this report <sup>2</sup>Expenditures include all funds.

## NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

None.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on the agency, please visit: [www.nyc.gov/ocme](http://www.nyc.gov/ocme).

