

# CORONER

The Coroner is an elected law enforcement official who conducts independent investigations into violent and suspicious deaths that occur in the county. He is responsible for legally deciding if a death is a homicide, suicide, accident, or natural death; determining the cause of death such as suffocation, drug overdose, drowning, and all other causes of death; determining the legal identity of each and every person that dies a violent or suspicious death in the county; and notifies families when a violent or suspicious death occurs in the county. The Coroner uses DNA, dental records, fingerprints, x-rays, interviews, searches and other methods to make legal identification and cause and manner of the person's death. The Coroner also has subpoena power to assist him in death investigations.

DEPT NUMBER: 1-9305	CORONER					
FUNDING SOURCE(S)	FY 2005/06 ACTUAL	FY 2006/07 ACTUAL	FY 2007/08 ACTUAL	FY 2008/09 BUDGET	FY 2009/10 BUDGET	INC/DEC FY 10 - 09
General Fund	874,412	845,553	1,021,725	859,362	<b>828,720</b>	(30,642)
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
Personnel Services Expenditures	360,647	391,178	469,183	401,502	<b>413,610</b>	12,108
Operating Expenditures	496,583	415,247	525,121	446,760	<b>412,110</b>	(34,650)
Capital Outlay	17,183	39,127	27,421	11,100	<b>3,000</b>	(8,100)
Other Expenditures	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0
<b>EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$874,412</b>	<b>\$845,553</b>	<b>\$1,021,725</b>	<b>\$859,362</b>	<b>\$828,720</b>	<b>(\$30,642)</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL</b>	6	7	7	7	7	0

### **FY 2009/10 Budget Highlights & Initiatives**

- Operating Expenditures are reduced in FY 2009/10 based on historical data and projected need.

### **Additional Responsibilities**

The Coroner's responsibilities in death investigation are the same whether one person is killed in an automobile collision or if a commercial airline crashes with hundreds of deaths. He uses toxicology and the results from a pathologist to determine the cause of death in each of these cases. After reviewing all facts and collecting all of the evidence, the Coroner rules as to the manner of death – homicide, suicide, accident, or natural death.

Many cases are complex and require special education and experience. Drug abuse in Spartanburg County now creates problems when deciding if an overdose is intentional or accidental. There are other cases involving drugs that are considered homicides and the Coroner must make a legal ruling in each of these deaths. He routinely investigates the following types of death: murder, suicide, fire, automobile collisions, plane crashes, boating accidents, hunting accidents, and any and all other violent and suspicious deaths including incidents such as individuals falling down the stairs in their homes, child and vulnerable adult deaths, and incidents where people fall from trees while trimming or fall from houses under construction. Other types of investigations deal with lightning and other electrical related deaths as well as farming accidents and incidents such as dog attacks. He must also investigate anytime a medical error causes a death of an individual. The Coroner must be able to investigate complex auto wreck scenes to determine if statements from witness are correct and environmental conditions were not responsible. In each case, the Coroner must be able to testify in court, maintain a

**SPARTANBURG COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
FY 2009/10 RECOMMENDED OPERATING BUDGET**

*(CORONER'S OFFICE CONTINUED)*

chain of evidence with any evidence collected and also maintain an evidence room that preserves evidence for testing and for court purposes. The Coroner also issues permits for body removal and cremation. If a case is suspicious or un-attended, the Coroner should be knowledgeable about all forms or mechanisms of death to render a cause and manner of death.

The Coroner's office responds to each and every scene as calls are received. It is not unusual to receive three (3) calls in less than one (1) hour. This requires all employees to be on call seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day. The scene must be secured and protected until the Coroner's Investigator arrives to conduct an investigation. The Investigator must be in route within ten (10) minutes of receiving the call to investigate a death.