Fast Facts for Religious Objections

* Religious Freedom and Objection to Autopsy:
  + Religious freedom is protected by the Minnesota Constitution.
  + MN Statute 390 recognizes a right to object to autopsy on religious grounds.
  + Religious objections must be raised by the representative of the decedent with the authority to control the final disposition of the remains.
  + Hennepin County Medical Examiner’s office (HCME) does not evaluate or validate the religious beliefs of decedent.
* Notification and Timeline for Autopsy:
  + If a religious (or other) objection exists, the Medical Examiner will retain custody of the body pending resolution of the matter.
  + HCME shall make an attempt to notify families within 24 hours of the death.
  + Autopsies can proceed without delay after 24 hours.
* Documentation:
  + HCME must provide written or verbal notice of intent to perform an autopsy.
  + Communication with families must be documented and archived indefinitely.
* Exceptions to a religious objection to autopsy:

Religious objection to autopsy does not apply in the following cases:

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| * + Suspicious deaths   + Suspected crimes   + Public health threat   + Unexplained deaths in children   + Deaths related to police activity | * + Workplace Injury   + Electrocution   + Drowning   + Unidentified remains   + Skeletonized remains   + Fire or explosion   + Deaths in custody |

* Legal requirements:
  + An affidavit is required if the autopsy is waived due to a religious objection.
  + HCME is not liable for failing to perform an autopsy in cases of religious objection.