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
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* 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.