

## **QUEBEC CODE OF ETHICS FOR CORONERS**

c. R-0.2, r.0.1

Code of Ethics for Coroners

An Act respecting the determination of the causes and circumstances of death  
(R.S.Q., c. R-0.2, ss. 28 and 165)

### DIVISION I GENERAL DUTIES

1. In the performance of his duties under the Act respecting the determination of the causes and circumstances of death (R.S.Q., c. R-0.2), in particular during an investigation or an inquest, a coroner shall respect the dignity, honour, reputation and privacy of the deceased person, as well as professional confidentiality in respect of that person.

O.C. 557-90, s. 1.

2. A coroner shall respect the religious beliefs and opinions of the deceased person and those of his relatives to the extent that the requirements imposed on him by law so permit.

O.C. 557-90, s. 2.

3. A coroner shall ensure that any dead body in his custody and possession is treated with dignity and respect.

O.C. 557-90, s. 3.

4. A coroner shall act in such a way that his conduct toward the relatives of the deceased person and toward the persons involved in the circumstances of the death reflects the respect and courtesy required by the circumstances.

O.C. 557-90, s. 4.

5. A coroner shall avoid any act, omission, conduct or statement relative to the performance of his duties that would be of a nature to adversely affect the institution of the coroner or other persons also performing the duties of a coroner.

O.C. 557-90, s. 5.

6. A coroner shall maintain good relations with the persons called to participate in an investigation or an inquest, shall conduct himself toward them with courtesy and respect, and shall make himself fully available to them.

O.C. 557-90, s. 6.

7. A coroner shall not interfere in an investigation or an inquest that is within the jurisdiction of another coroner.

O.C. 557-90, s. 7.

8. Coroners, shall act courteously toward one another and shall maintain relations characterized by good faith.

O.C. 557-90, s. 8.

9. In the performance of his duties, a coroner shall show constant concern to respect his duties toward the protection of human life.

O.C. 557-90, s. 9.

## DIVISION II SPECIAL DUTIES

### **1. Integrity and dignity**

10. A coroner shall perform his duties with integrity and dignity.

O.C. 557-90, s. 10.

11. In the performance of his duties, a coroner shall not make immoderate use of psychotropic substances, including alcohol, or any other substance producing similar effects.

O.C. 557-90, s. 11.

12. A coroner shall disassociate the promotion and performance of his professional and business activities from the performance of his duties.

O.C. 557-90, s. 12.

13. A coroner shall ensure that order and decorum are maintained during an inquest and shall show a courteous attitude toward the persons present.

O.C. 557-90, s. 13.

14. A coroner shall demonstrate reserve and moderation in any public comments concerning his investigations or activities and shall formulate such

comments solely for pedagogical or scientific purposes consequent to the performance of his duties.

O.C. 557-90, s. 14.

## **2. Objectivity, rigorousness and independence**

15. A coroner shall clearly demonstrate objectivity, rigorousness and independence.

O.C. 557-90, s. 15.

16. A coroner shall avoid any situation that could compromise his ability to perform his duties objectively, rigorously and independently.

O.C. 557-90, s. 16.

17. A coroner shall conduct himself in such a way as not to encourage or incite anyone to offer him anything to which he is not entitled under law; he shall refuse anything that might nevertheless be offered to him or he shall dispose of it as provided by law.

O.C. 557-90, s. 17.

18. A coroner shall refrain from pursuing an investigation or holding an inquest where an impairment of his objectivity, the rigorousness of his judgment or his independence could result, in particular:

(1) from personal, family, social, professional or business relations with the deceased person, with a person involved in the circumstances of the death or with a person called to participate in the investigation or inquest;

(2) from any public communication of an idea or an opinion relative to the death;

(3) from any manifestation of hostility or favoritism toward the deceased person or toward a person involved in the circumstances of the death.

O.C. 557-90, s. 18.

19. A coroner shall ascertain that his report contains the facts that are known to him relative to the causes and the circumstances of the death.

O.C. 557-90, s. 19.

20. A coroner shall ascertain the probative value, the authenticity and the relevance of any fact on which he bases himself in establishing the identity of the deceased person, the date, the place, the causes and the circumstances of the death.

O.C. 557-90, s. 20.

21. A coroner shall ascertain the authenticity of any fact that he publicly discloses before submitting his report and shall estimate the risks and disadvantages that could result from such disclosure.

O.C. 557-90, s. 21.

### **3. Availability and diligence**

22. A coroner shall demonstrate reasonable availability and diligence.

O.C. 557-90, s. 22.

23. A coroner shall take the necessary measures for the examination of the body or for visiting places, where the circumstances of the death so require.

O.C. 557-90, s. 23.

24. A coroner shall make himself available to the relatives of the deceased person in order to meet them and provide them with information where the situation so requires.

O.C. 557-90, s. 24.

25. A coroner shall facilitate the release of the body and shall attend thereto with all the diligence that the relatives of the deceased person may reasonably expect.

O.C. 557-90, s. 25.

26. A coroner shall take steps to ensure that the conditions under which he exercises his custody of objects and documents ensure their conservation and make it possible to return them to claimants in accordance with the law.

O.C. 557-90, s. 26.

27. A coroner shall inform the relatives of the deceased person that they have the choice of funeral arrangements.

O.C. 557-90, s. 27.

#### **4. Competence and knowledge**

28. A coroner shall maintain his knowledge and his abilities in the fields relevant to the performance of his duties so that they meet the requirements of his work and ensure the quality thereof.

O.C. 557-90, s. 28.

29. A coroner shall be familiar with the statutes, regulations and directives governing the performance of his duties.

O.C. 557-90, s. 29.

30. A coroner shall ensure that the person to whom he delegates powers, in cases provided for by law, is familiar with the statutes, regulations and directives governing the performance of his duties as a coroner.

O.C. 557-90, s. 30.

31. A coroner shall participate, to the extent possible, in the instruction programs implemented by the Chief Coroner.

O.C. 557-90, s. 31.

32. A coroner shall provide the contribution expected of him in the instruction of other coroners, in particular by sharing with them his knowledge and his experiences.

O.C. 557-90, s. 32.

33. A coroner shall respect the limits of his expertise and knowledge, in particular in fields that are outside of his experience, and he shall personally ascertain the competence of the sources to whom he must resort.

O.C. 557-90, s. 33.

#### **5. Confidentiality**

34. A coroner shall respect, even during private conversations, the confidentiality of any document or information that he has obtained in the performance of his duties, unless the disclosure thereof is authorized by law.