

**OPINION 65-182****Syllabus:**

1. When a coroner must sign a certificate of death and the county in which the death occurred is known, it is the coroner of such county who must sign the certificate of death.

2. When a coroner must sign a certificate of death and the county in which the death occurred is not known, it is the coroner of the county in which there was acquired the first knowledge of death who must sign the certificate of death.

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**To: H. William Bowers, Warren County Pros. Atty., Lebanon, Ohio**  
**By: William B. Saxbe, Attorney General, October 8, 1965**

I have before me your request for my opinion which reads as follows:

"Where a person is injured in one county and pronounced dead on arrival at a hospital in another county, and the exact place or time of death cannot be ascertained, which county coroner should sign the death certificate?"

The General Assembly amended Section 313.01, Revised Code, effective November 4, 1965, to read as follows:

"A coroner shall be elected quadrennially in each county, who shall hold his office for a term of four years, beginning on the first Monday of January next after his election.

"As used in the Revised Code, unless the context otherwise requires 'coroner' means the coroner of the county in which death occurs or the dead human body is found."

When the county in which death occurred is known, it is the coroner of that county who must sign the certificate of death. In a case where the county in which death occurred is not known, the coroner of the county in which "the dead human body is found" must sign the certificate of death.

Section 313.11, Revised Code, provides in part as follows:

"Any person who discovers the body or acquires the first knowledge of the

death of any person who dies as a result of criminal or other violent means \* \* \* shall immediately notify the office of the coroner \* \* \*"

(Emphasis added)

When the language of Section 313.11, supra, is taken into consideration with the fact that a dead human body cannot be found until a determination is made that death has occurred, I must conclude that in a case where the county of death is not known, it is the coroner of the county in which there was acquired the first knowledge of death who must sign the certificate of death.

Therefore, it is my opinion and you are accordingly advised as follows:

1. When a coroner must sign a certificate of death and the county in which the death occurred is known, it is the coroner of such county who must sign the certificate of death.
2. When a coroner must sign a certificate of death and the county in which the death occurred is not known, it is the coroner of the county in which there was acquired the first knowledge of death who must sign the certificate of death.