

# PROJECT ECHO: OD-FIT

Overdose Fatality Investigation Techniques

## Death Scene Investigation

The death scene investigation is the key start to a death investigation, and medicolegal death investigators (MDI)s must keep track of many factors when examining scenes. It is essential to complete a thorough death scene investigation by gathering information from family and those at the scene, taking scene photographs, and examining the body before transporting or releasing the decedent from the scene.

### Key Takeaways

- During a death scene investigation, an investigator should be confident in searching the area for anything that may have caused or contributed to the death.
- When conducting a scene investigation, take as many photographs as possible as the opportunity to return to the scene is unlikely.
- While at the scene, look for key items that may indicate substance use (e.g., drugs or drug paraphernalia).
- Document all relevant information pertaining to the scene, decedent exam, and other relevant information obtained while on the scene.
- Investigators play a critical role in the investigation as the eyes and ears of the initial investigation for the forensic pathologist.

To learn more about death scene investigation, check out the [session recording](#) and [slides](#) or email [odfitecho@astho.org](mailto:odfitecho@astho.org) for more information.

**About the Presenter:** Alfarena (Alfie) McGinty is currently the Chief Deputy Coroner at the Marion County Coroner's Office in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is an Indiana-certified Medicolegal Death Investigator and has worked at the Marion County Coroner's Office for over 24 years. She is the first African American female appointed as Chief Deputy Coroner in Marion County and has served for 16 years. She oversees over 4,000 death investigations annually, coordinates training, and education for the staff, and develops agency work policies and procedures.



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