

Consultation paper: *Guidelines for the retention of tissues at post-mortem examination*

- 8.5 Coroners and Procurators Fiscal should produce an information leaflet explaining to relatives the legal necessity to retain tissues or organs and of their rights to the material when the examination has been completed. This leaflet should also explain the value of donation of tissues, such as aortic valves, for the treatment of living patients, and outline the mechanisms by which consent for this can be given.
- 8.6 Post-mortem examination reports for medico-legal authorities should state clearly what, if any, tissues or organs have been retained in pursuance of the investigation of the death.
- 8.7 Hospital and forensic histopathology services should have standard operating procedures for the archiving and disposal of tissues retained from post-mortem examinations, ensuring that their disposal procedures meet with public expectations.
- 8.8 Whenever possible, retained tissue should be released to funeral directors chosen by the relatives. When tissues are released, the recipient should give written confirmation that they will dispose of the tissue in the manner selected by the relatives (burial or cremation) within a reasonable time and that they understand any hazards associated with the tissue and its fixative.
- 8.9 These guidelines will be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, amended in the light of advances in medicine and in pathological techniques, and changing public attitudes and legislation.

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