



# Process of Blood Alcohol Concentration Reporting in Texas and Other States

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# Overview

- Types of Death Investigation Systems in the USA
- Types of Death Investigation Systems in Texas
- Comparison States
- Themes from Comparisons
- Conclusions

# Types of Death Investigation Systems: USA

Medical  
Examiner

Coroner

Combination

# Types of Death Investigation Systems: Texas

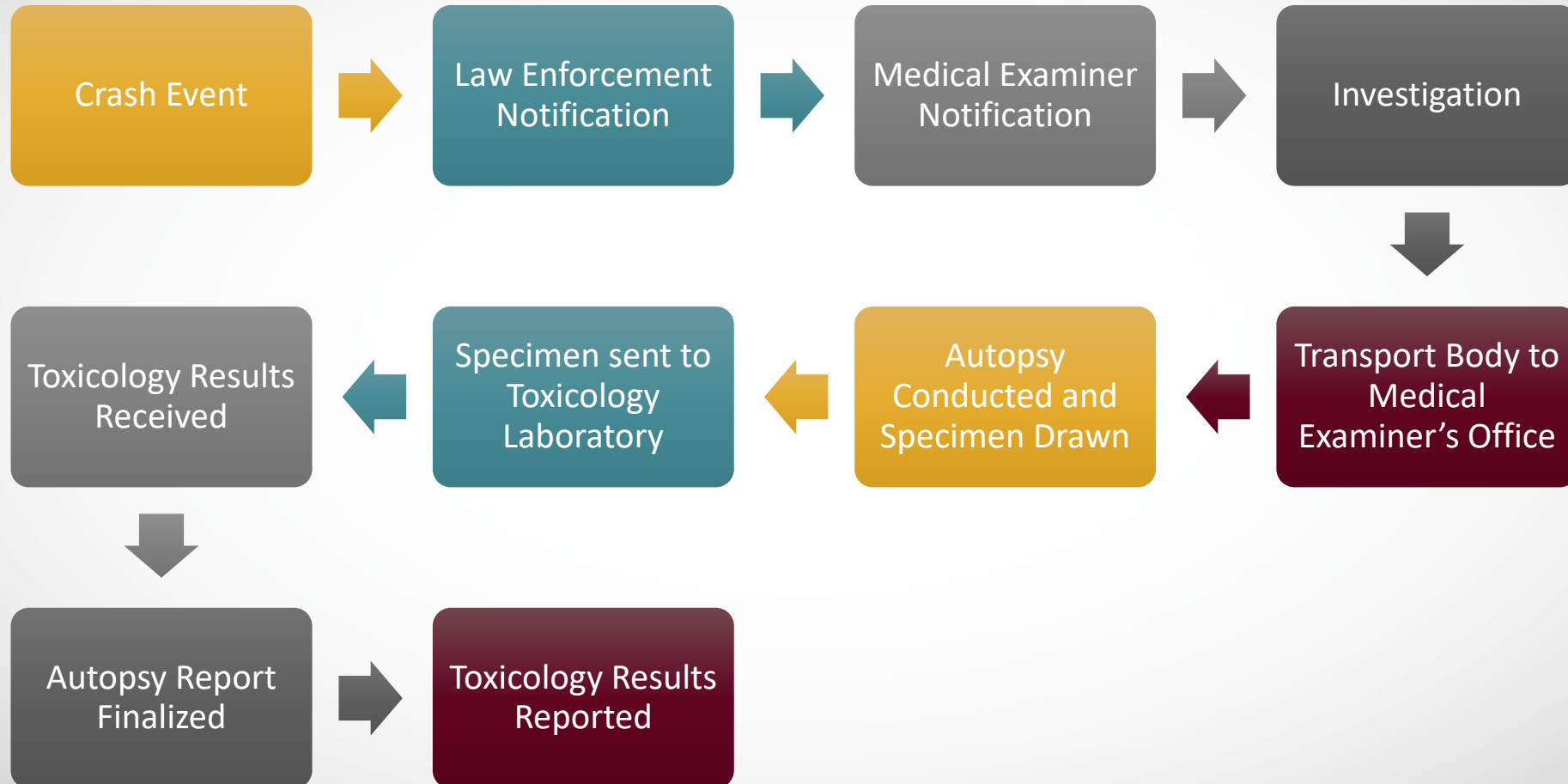
Medical  
Examiner

Justice of the  
Peace

# Medical Examiner System

- Currently, there are 12 counties operating with a Medical Examiner's Office
- There is also one medical district, which operates a joint Medical Examiner's Office serving 4 counties
- Medical Examiner has the duty and responsibility to determine the cause and manner of death

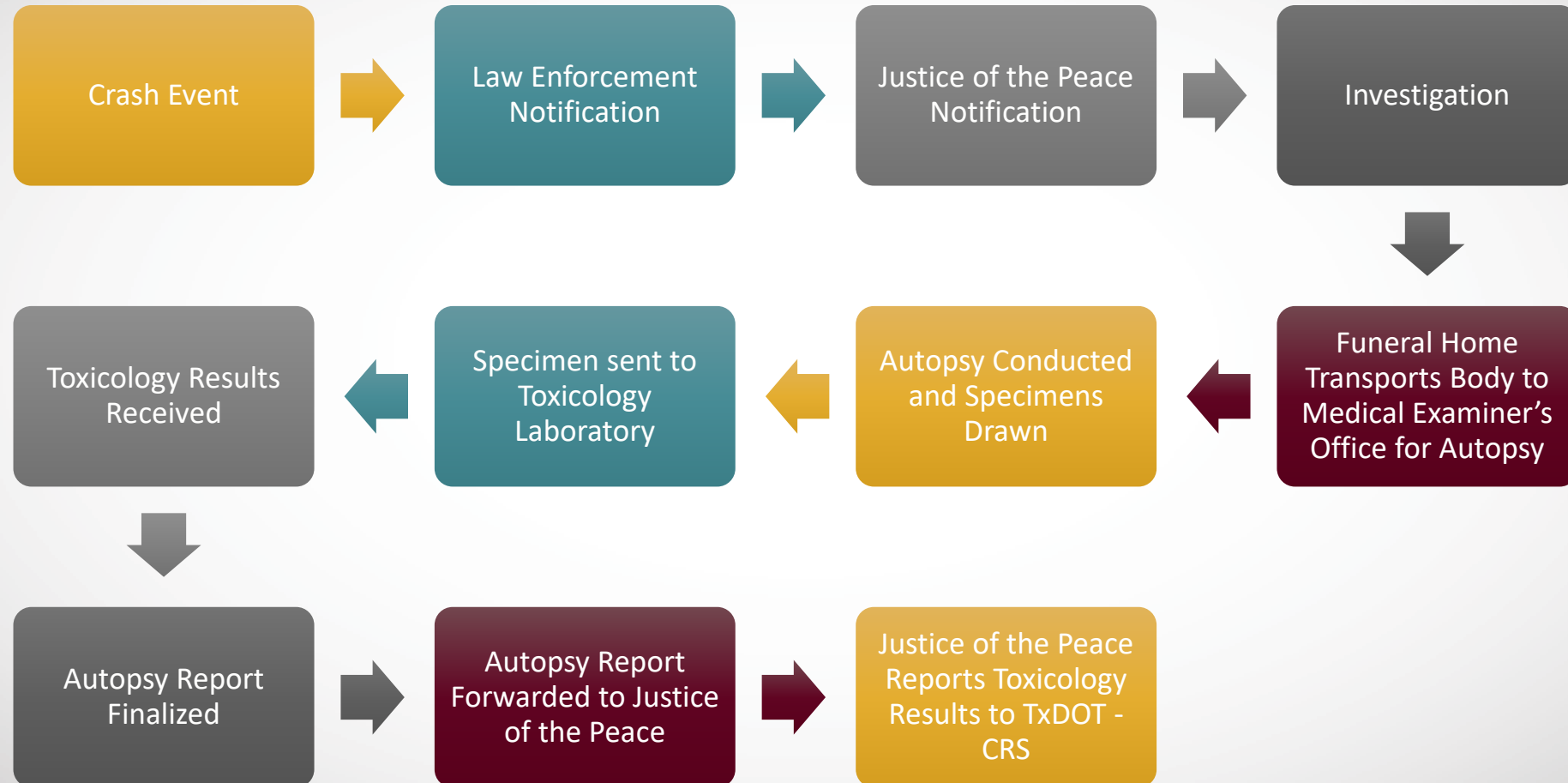
# Process of BAC Reporting by Medical Examiner System



# Justice of the Peace System

- Remaining 239 counties utilize the Justice of the Peace System
- Role of Justice of the Peace is to:
  - Pronounce death
  - Order a formal investigation into cause and manner of death

# Process of BAC Reporting by Justice of the Peace System





# Selection of Comparison States

Category	Type	State	Percent BAC Reported
<b>All Person Type in Fatal Crashes</b>	by Alcohol Test Type: Test Given	1 New Hampshire	63%
		2 Montana	59%
		3 Nebraska	57%
		4 Missouri	55%
		5 Alaska	55%
	by Alcohol Test Result: Actual BAC value (0.00 to 0.94)	1 New Hampshire	63%
		2 South Dakota	59%
		3 Montana	58%
		4 Nebraska	57%
		5 Missouri	55%
<b>Driver (including motorcyclist)</b>	by Alcohol Test Type: Test Given	1 Montana	80%
		2 Nebraska	78%
		3 New Hampshire	77%
		4 South Dakota	77%
		5 Maine	76%
	by Alcohol Test Result: Actual BAC value (0.00 to 0.94)	1 South Dakota	87%
		2 Montana	79%
		3 Nebraska	78%
		4 New Hampshire	76%
		5 Alaska	75%

# Process of BAC Reporting – South Dakota

- South Dakota has:
  - Mandatory testing statutes
  - No State Medical Examiner's Office
- South Dakota employs a hybrid death investigator system
  - Larger counties use the Medical Examiner system
  - Smaller counties use the Coroner system

# Process of BAC Reporting – Montana

- Montana has a State Office of the Medical Examiner
- Montana uses the Coroner system for death investigations
  - Most coroners are sheriff's deputies or law enforcement officers

# Process of BAC Reporting – Nebraska

- Nebraska uses the Coroner death investigation system
  - County attorney's act as coroners
- Nebraska statutes mandate the coroner report any death to the Department of Transportation within 10 days of the death
  - Coroner is also required to order toxicology testing

# Process of BAC Reporting – New Hampshire

- New Hampshire statutes provide for a State Medical Examiner's Office
- New Hampshire statutes require toxicology testing for all drivers in crashes that involve death or serious bodily injury

# Process of BAC Reporting – Alaska

- Alaska statutes provide for a State Medical Examiner's Office
- Alaska statutes do not mandate that blood testing occur in all traffic related fatalities
- Similar to Texas, Alaska has a supplemental crash form to collect BAC test status, test type and method of alcohol determination by law enforcement

# Themes from Comparisons

- Every state sets up their death investigation system differently
- Successful BAC reporting is a result of:

Clear and concise  
statutory  
mandates

Strong public  
policy  
considerations

Good working  
relationships  
between agencies

# Conclusions

- Based on comparison states, Texas could improve BAC reporting by:

Creating clear and concise statutory mandates for BAC testing

Create strong public policy and promote buy-in among stakeholders

Promote development of working relationships among agencies





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