

7825 Liberty



The State of South Carolina
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

HENRY MCMASTER
ATTORNEY GENERAL

August 20, 2004

The Honorable Robert C. Haythorn
Interim Coroner of Aiken County
P. O. Box 599
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

Dear Coroner Haythorn:

In a letter to this office you referenced that by statute, a coroner is required to maintain a "Book of Inquisitions". See: S.C. Code Ann. Section 17-7-330 (2003). You have asked whether such book must be maintained as a physical paper record or may these records be kept in electronic form in the coroner's computer data base.

Enclosed is a copy of a prior opinion of this office which dealt with the question as to whether a book must be maintained or whether the proceedings may be kept in a file folder system. The opinion commented as follows:

...it is obvious that what is intended by such statute is a recording of all inquests in a volume as opposed to totally utilizing a file system to maintain records relating to an inquest. Therefore, while a coroner may find it more convenient to keep records of proceedings in file folders...a separate volume should be kept...This maintaining of a separate volume may involve in some instances a repetitive system but, as referenced, the maintenance of a "Book of Inquisitions" is required by Section 17-3-330.

The Honorable Robert C. Haythorn
Page 2
August 20, 2004

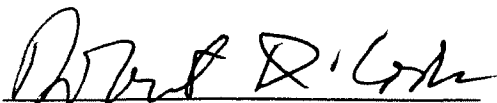
Consistent with such, while records may be kept for convenience in an electronic form, until the General Assembly amends Section 17-3-330 and its requirement for "The Coroner's Book of Inquisitions", such separate book should be maintained.

Sincerely,



Charles H. Richardson
Senior Assistant Attorney General

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:



Robert D. Cook
Assistant Deputy Attorney General