

22a-230. Same; inquest, when; jury; oath; subpoenas; arrest. (a) The coroner may hold an inquest upon the dead bodies of such persons whose deaths appear to have been caused by unlawful means when the circumstances relating to such deaths are unknown. The inquest shall be held in accordance with the provisions of this section. Except as provided in subsection (b), upon being notified of any such death occurring within the district, if an inquest is to be held, the coroner shall summon a jury of six residents of the county in which the death occurred, at a time and place named, for the purpose of inquiring into the cause of death. In any other case in which this act requires that the coroner be notified, the coroner may also summon six citizens of the county to appear at a time and place named.

(b) When the coroner has been notified of any death as provided in subsection (a), and the cause of such death occurred in a county other than the county in which the death occurred, the coroner of the county in which the cause of death occurred shall take the responsibility of summoning a jury as provided in subsection (a) for the purpose of inquiring into the death, if requested to do so by the coroner of the county in which the death occurred.

(c) If any juror fails to appear, the coroner shall summon the proper number from bystanders immediately, and proceed to impanel them and administer the following oath, in substance: "You do solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will diligently inquire and true presentment make, when, how and by what means the person whose body lies here dead came to death, according to your knowledge, and evidence given you. So help you God."

(d) The coroner may issue subpoenas for witnesses, returnable forthwith, or at such time and place as the coroner shall therein direct. Witnesses shall be allowed the fees provided in K.S.A. 28-125, and amendments thereto. In cases of disobedience of the coroner's subpoena, it shall be the duty of the judge of the district court, on application of the coroner, to compel obedience to the coroner's subpoena by indirect proceedings for contempt as in cases of disobedience of a subpoena issued from the district court.

(e) An oath shall be administered to the witness, in substance as follows: "You do solemnly swear (or affirm) that the testimony which you shall give to this inquest, concerning the death of the person here lying dead, shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help you God."

(f) The testimony shall be reduced to writing, under the coroner's order, and subscribed by the witness.

(g) The jurors, having inspected the body, if available, heard the testimony, and made all needful inquiries, shall return to the coroner their inquisition in writing, under their hands, in substance as follows, and stating the matter in the following form suggested, as far as found:

State of Kansas, _____ County.

An inquisition held at _____, in _____ county, on the _____ day of _____, A.D., year __, before me, _____ coroner of such county, on the body of _____ (or, a person unknown), there lying dead; by the jurors whose names are hereunto subscribed. The jurors, upon their oaths, do say (here state when, how, by what person, means, weapon or accident the person died, and whether feloniously). In testimony whereof, the jurors have hereunto subscribe, the day and year aforesaid. Which shall be attested by the coroner.

(h) If the inquisition finds a crime has been committed on the deceased, and name the person the jury believes has committed the crime, the inquest shall not be made public until after the arrest directed in the next subsection.

(i) If the person charged is present, the coroner may order the person arrested by an officer or any other person, and shall then make a warrant requiring the officer or other person to take the arrested person before a judge of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(j) If the person charged is not present, the coroner may issue a warrant to the sheriff of the county, directing the sheriff to arrest the person and take the arrested person before a judge of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(k) The warrant of a coroner in the above case shall be of equal authority with that of a judge of a court of competent jurisdiction. When the person charged is brought before the court, the person charged shall be dealt with as a person held under a complaint in the usual form.

(l) The warrant of the coroner shall recite substantially the transaction before the coroner, and the verdict of the jury of inquest leading to the arrest. The warrant shall be a sufficient foundation for the proceeding of the court instead of a complaint.

(m) The coroner shall then return to the clerk of the district court the inquisition, the written evidence and a list of the witnesses who testified to material matters.

(n) The district coroner shall receive such compensation, in addition to other compensation provided by law for the coroner, for holding an inquest as specified by the county commissioners of a single-county judicial district or the county commissioners of the county with the largest population in multiple-county judicial districts.

History: L. 1963, ch. 166, § 6; L. 1969, ch. 143, § 4; L. 1976, ch. 124, § 1; L. 1993, ch. 214, § 5; L. 2000, ch. 54, § 1; July 1.