Title	Procedure for Identifying Unknown Deceased Pts
Applies to	RAH & IRH
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Procedure for identifying unknown deceased patients in the emergency department

In most cases identification of deceased patients may be made in the department if the patient has been identified by a relative or friend prior to hospital transfer or has photographic ID on their person.

Occasionally patients die in the department and are not formally identified before being taken to the mortuary. Ordinarily the Police are called to assist but they may not be able to attend out of hours if all officers are engaged in other duties. Relatives may then phone the department and request to see the deceased. The procedure for this is as follows:

If the death has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal for any reason then the Fiscal should liaise with Police and relatives about viewing the body and this is ordinarily done by appointment at the QEUH mortuary. A police officer should be present for the identification to preserve the chain of evidence.

If the death is not being reported to the Fiscal then a senior member of ED staff should contact the mortuary to make an appointment for relatives to view the body and also should accompany the relatives to the mortuary if the relative is attending for identification purposes. If the deceased patient is then identified then the ED staff member can update the patient details on medical notes. If the patient is not identified then the Police should be contacted if they have not been contacted already.