

## Is there anything else I should know?

Before you apply for access to court documents, please consider that it may be upsetting to read details about a loved one's death. Some information may be graphic or distressing. We suggest you take medical reports to your general practitioner who can explain the content.

## Helpful contact numbers

(Contact hours 9 am to 5 pm unless otherwise noted)

Compassionate Friends Victoria Inc.	1800 641 091
Federation of Community Legal Centres	(03) 9652 1500
Industrial Deaths Support and Advocacy	(03) 9654 3353
Interpreter Service	131 450
Mercy Western Grief Services	(03) 9364 9838
National Relay Service TTY Service	133 677 (for hearing impaired)
	1300 555 727 (Speak and Listen)
Public Records of Victoria	1800 657 452
Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages	1300 369 367
Road Trauma Support Team	1300 367 797
SIDS and Kids Victoria	1800 240 400
Victims Support Agency	1800 819 817
Victoria Legal Aid	(03) 9269 0234 1800 677 402
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services	(03) 9419 3888 1800 064 864 (24 hours)
Victorian Court Information and Welfare Network	(03) 9603 7433 1800 681 614



**Coroners Court  
of Victoria**

## Access to Documents

### Coroners Court of Victoria

65 Kavanagh Street Southbank 3006  
T 1300 309 519 F 1300 546 989  
W [www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)

## Access to documents

When a coroner investigates a death or fire the court gathers a range of documents. At the end of the investigation the coroner writes a finding. A finding details the identity of the person who has died, the cause of the death or fire, in certain situations the circumstances of the death or fire, and any comments or recommendations that may help prevent similar deaths.

A number of findings are now available on our website. However, the individual documents in the court file are not generally available to the public. If you wish to see any of these documents, you can apply to the court for access.

## What type of documents does the court have?

A court file can contain many different documents. This will depend on how complex the investigation is.

Documents can include:

- police reports
- witness statements
- photographs
- expert reports
- medical examination reports
- the coroner's finding.

## Who can apply for access to documents?

Generally, you need to be an 'interested party' in an investigation to gain access to documents. To become an 'interested party', you must write to the court and explain your interest in the case, and list the documents you want.

The 'senior next of kin' is usually included as an 'interested party'. Unless the coroner decides otherwise, all 'interested parties' receive a copy of the brief of evidence prepared for an inquest. The 'senior next of kin' also receives any medical reports.

A coroner may also release documents to:

- a statutory body for a statutory function
- a member of the police force for law enforcement
- researchers, for research approved by an ethics committee
- anyone who can satisfy the coroner that it is in the public interest.

## How do I apply for access to documents?

If you are not 'the senior next of kin' or an 'interested party' recognised by the court, you can apply by completing our Access to Documents Form. To receive the form contact us on **1300 309 519** or download it from our website at **[www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)**

Complete and return the form to us by mail, fax or email. Our records email address is:  
**[coronerscourt.records@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](mailto:coronerscourt.records@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)**

We will let you know in writing if the coroner grants your application.

## Who decides whether to approve my application?

If the investigation was completed after 1 June 1986 a coroner will decide whether to approve the application. The coroner may impose conditions on the release of a document. A penalty may apply if you break these conditions. If the investigation was completed before 1 June 1986 contact the Public Records Office of Victoria on **1800 657 452**.

## Can my application be refused?

Yes. A coroner may refuse an application, for example if a criminal prosecution is in progress, or if the person who has applied does not have sufficient interest.

## How long will it take to receive the documents?

This varies depending on how recent the matter is. We may also contact the 'senior next of kin' first to let them know we have received a request for information and ask if they have any concerns. The coroner will consider these concerns before deciding whether to release the documents.

## Are there any fees?

You may have to pay for copies of documents. The court may waive or reduce these charges if it is appropriate. See the court website for more information.  
**[www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)**