RCW 68.50.010 Coroner's jurisdiction over remains. The jurisdiction of bodies of all deceased persons who come to their death suddenly when in apparent good health without medical attendance within the 36 hours preceding death; or where the circumstances of death indicate death was caused by unnatural or unlawful means; or where death occurs under suspicious circumstances; or where a coroner's autopsy or postmortem or coroner's inquest is to be held; or where death results from unknown or obscure causes, or where death occurs within one year following an accident; or where the death is caused by any violence whatsoever, whether self-induced or otherwise; where death apparently results from drowning, hanging, burns, electrocution, gunshot wounds, stabs or cuts, lightning, starvation, radiation, exposure, alcoholism, narcotics or other addictions, tetanus, strangulations, suffocation or smothering; or where death is due to a violent contagious disease or suspected contagious disease which may be a public health hazard; or where death results from alleged rape, carnal knowledge or sodomy, where death occurs in a jail or prison; where a body is found dead or is not claimed by relatives or friends, is hereby vested in the county coroner or medical examiner, which bodies may be removed and placed in the morgue under such rules as are adopted by the coroner or medical examiner with the approval of the county commissioners, having jurisdiction, providing therein how the bodies shall be brought to and cared for at the morgue and held for the proper identification where necessary. [2025 c 374 s 2; 2021 c 127 s 7; 1963 c 178 s 1; 1953 c 188 s 1; 1917 c 90 s 3; RRS s 6042. Formerly RCW 68.08.010.]

Findings—2025 c 374: "The legislature finds that every Washingtonian should be treated with respect and dignity after a pregnancy loss and should be able to seek medical assistance without fear of civil or criminal liability. The threat of criminal prosecution of pregnancy outcomes is partly traceable to out-of-date provisions in state law that allow investigations of certain abortions and pregnancy losses. The legislature further finds that removal of these provisions changes neither requirements to report births or deaths, including fetal deaths, or prepare and publish vital statistics under chapter 70.58A RCW, nor the ability of coroners to investigate deaths, including fetal deaths, that may have been caused by unlawful or suspicious circumstances, including violence against the pregnant person, provided such investigations are not used to criminalize the pregnant person who experienced the pregnancy loss or had an abortion." [2025 c 374 s 1.]