

Accreditation is the desired outcome of a process in which the policies, procedures, and practices of laboratories, programs, or offices are reviewed, usually including on-site inspection, to determine compliance with accreditation standards. An accredited lab or office has successfully completed such a review and has demonstrated compliance with the requirements of the accrediting agency or organization. A few accrediting organizations have direct relevance to various aspects of death investigation.

The **American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD)** through its ASCLD/LAB program, inspects and accredits crime laboratories in the areas of drug identification, toxicology, trace evidence, firearms examination, questioned documents, forensic serology, DNA testing, and latent print examination. The accreditation process applies to the crime lab as a whole, not the individual disciplines, so a crime lab is either accredited or not accredited. Further information may be obtained at <http://www.asclcd-lab.org>

The **National Association of Medical Examiners** has an inspections and accreditation program for medical examiner offices/systems. Further information, including the inspections checklist, may be found on NAME's web site.

The **American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT)** offers an accreditation program for forensic toxicology labs, which may comprise a section within a larger crime laboratory. Further information may be obtained at <http://www.abft.org>

The **College of American Pathologists (CAP)** has a laboratory accreditation program that is geared mainly toward hospital and other medical laboratories but may involve labs that do some forensic work. CAP also has proficiency testing programs in which samples are sent to labs as "unknown" specimens and results of the laboratory's testing of the samples is compared with expected results to evaluate laboratory performance. Further information may be found at <http://www.cap.org>

The **Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)** has an inspections and accreditation program related to training programs for physicians in various aspects of medicine, including pathology and forensic pathology. Many medical specialty boards which offer certification of individual physicians require that training be obtained in accredited programs. Further information on ACGME may be found at <http://www.acgme.org>