



CASE STUDY

Mopec Helps the Macomb County Chief Medical Examiner Build a World-Class Morgue

HISTORY | The original Macomb County Morgue, located in suburban Detroit, was established in 1952. Although the number of autopsies and suspicious-death cases had risen dramatically since the original morgue was established; it remained the same one-room, 1,200 sq. ft. facility. The surrounding population has increased dramatically since that time, and Macomb County outgrew the morgue's capabilities. After lobbying for a new morgue for more than 15 years, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners granted funding for the project. Under direction of Macomb County Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Daniel Spitz, the new 6,000 sq. ft. new morgue was to have an all-encompassing systematic approach to medical examination.

GOAL | Dr. Spitz envisioned all aspects housed in one facility, including an Investigative Staff, Morgue Staff and the Medical Examiner. With all personnel under one roof, the main goal was to enhance the safety and work flow for each staff member. This required a unique design model.

ENTER MOPEC | When our team was formed to assist in the creation of the new Macomb County Morgue, we were determined to be the premier mortuary equipment provider, focusing on the needs and expectations of Dr. Spitz and his team. To succeed, we knew we'd have to be innovative. Considerable thought went into mortuary technology and we focused on investments with both short-term and long-term flexibility. We invested time in design strategies that would enhance Dr. Spitz's teams' workflow and throughput.

CUSTOMIZATION | The request for one-of-a-kind products made this project a true challenge, but that's just the type we love. Dr. Spitz sought a dual sink design with a single cart for the body and a separate cart in the open space with the ability to directly cut organs on. Adding this feature made viewing the cutting of the organs easier in a teaching environment and assisted in forensic cases when there are multiple viewers, which is hard to do in a typical morgue layout. Dr. Spitz wanted to eliminate the hassle of having to maneuver a body from one cart to the next for x-rays during the autopsy process, so we equipped each moveable cart with a specially designed fiberglass top. Since there's no longer a need to put x-ray film beneath the body, Dr. Spitz can perform an x-ray through the body on the cart with his equipment. The dull muted gray surface on the fiberglass top is also lighter, easier to clean and excellent for photography.

A significant difference in the old morgue versus the new morgue was the increase in capacity, as well as workspace. Moving from the old morgue which housed a maximum of six bodies to the new facility which houses twenty bodies, and increasing from one workstation to four made a large impact on how Dr. Spitz's team approaches their day-to-day tasks. The ability to house up to twenty bodies comes from the additional space in the Mopec-designed customized walk-in refrigeration unit. The stainless steel unit comes with a freezer component to allow for long-term body storage when needed. The refrigeration unit is also equipped with a key fob to track who is entering the unit and at what times – crucial for the nature of work that takes place in forensic cases.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINAL MORGUE | Dr. Spitz's vision came to life, and we were honored to have helped him with this achievement. Key highlights included:

Work Flow System: Dr. Spitz wanted an efficient work flow system, and that is what Mopec delivered. His process is concise--keep a body on one cart for its entire duration at the morgue, eliminating additional transportation and handling. Typical transportation and handling of the body is now very simple. The body is brought into the rear of the morgue, is placed on a cart, wheeled to the scale to be weighed, brought into the autopsy room for examination, and wheeled back to the cooler until the funeral home comes to retrieve the body.

Isolation Room: An isolation room was added for autopsies to be performed on bodies which could spread infectious diseases. X-ray equipment is located in this room, and used to identify injuries a person may have had or to establish the identification of the person.



Observation Area: A discrete area was created for families to identify a body, or for police and prosecutors to view an autopsy. The body can be viewed without having to move the body and eliminating the need for viewers to be physically in the autopsy area.

Natural Lighting: The entire morgue is enhanced with large glass windows to maximize lighting while maintaining privacy.

FINAL RESULT | We assisted in the planning and creation of a facility that we're all very proud of. Dr. Spitz's in-depth interview is a great testament to our continuing efforts in customization and high-touch service through our advanced team of engineers.