

# Seattle investigator charged with stealing drugs from dead

02:30 PM PDT on Tuesday, August 5, 2008

By DON PORTER / KING 5 News

SEATTLE - Thomas Chapin was a death investigator for the King County Medical Examiner at Harborview Medical Center.



Video: Seattle death investigator charged with stealing drugs from dead

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He's charged with stealing prescription painkillers and methamphetamines from the dead.

Police say Chapin's co-workers grew suspicious when pills found at the scene of a death would turn up missing.

Powerful painkillers including oxycontin, oxycodone and other controlled substances, legally prescribed for the deceased, were stolen and used by then-King County death investigator Thomas Chapin.

Court documents allege that Chapin stole "prescription and illicit drugs whenever the opportunity presented itself."

This went on for years, since Chapin joined the medical examiner's office back in 2002.

"There's no question that Mr. Chapin was under the influence of a powerful addiction and I think in light of that any temptation was probably going to be too much," said Gary Johnson of King County. "Now we've taken steps that will ensure that a similar temptation doesn't impact another employee again."

Thomas Chapin turned himself in after a doctor found pills missing in a death investigation back in May. He faces two felony counts of drug possession - up to year in jail. But he has no criminal record and if he completes a year-long drug treatment program, the case against Thomas Chapin could be dismissed.