

By ROBERT PIERCE and LARRY PHILLIPS • Daily Leader

A report from the Oklahoma State Medical Examiner's office has likely ruled out a heart attack as the cause of death of a 52-year-old Turpin, Okla., man.

Cherokee Ballard, public information officer for the medical examiner's office, said the cause of death has been listed as a drowning and the manner of death an accident in the death of Terry Stanton Monday night.

Ballard said the case is not complete, however.

"This could take months," she said in a phone interview Wednesday.



"Our case load is huge. The average length of a case – to get the case finished – is 3 to 5 months. He has been released. I believe that his body has been picked up."

Ballard said she believes Stanton was by himself at the time of his death.

"I don't know if there was a suspicion that caused this to happen,"

she said. "I think he was near his pickup."

Ballard said because the death was ruled an accident, this would likely take a heart attack out of play as the cause of death.

"Heart attack would be a natural," she said. "It says accident and drowning. The case is not complete, but we're working on it. If we find something else, that will come out in our final report."

Ballard said the medical examiner's office will do a full toxicology work up on Stanton's body to see if drugs or alcohol were present at the time of his death.

"If we find anything like that, then for each positive result that we would get from that, we would test those for others," she said. "We would go deeper if we find something that red flags. That could be 3 to 5 months and sometimes longer."

According to Stanton's daughter, Kari Stanton, Ballard relayed to the family what authorities at the scene had surmised.

"They don't know why his truck, a big welding pickup, got in the ditch," Kari said. "But they said it looks like he got out and tried to push it. It might have been then he had a heart attack, because he tried to crawl out of the ditch and collapsed and slid back down under the running board of the truck and got pinned under it.

"He got pinned face down and drowned in two-inches of water," she added.

Kari confirmed the medical examiner has ruled the death accidental rather than an unattended death by heart attack.