

331.805 Prohibited actions — cremation permit — penalties.

1. When a death occurs in the manner specified in section 331.802, subsection 3, the body, clothing, and any articles upon or near the body shall not be disturbed or removed from the position in which it is found, and physical or biological evidence shall not be obtained or collected from the body, without authorization from the county medical examiner or the state medical examiner except for the purpose of preserving the body from loss or destruction or permitting the passage of traffic on a highway, railroad or airport, or unless the failure to immediately remove the body might endanger life, safety, or health. A person who moves, disturbs, or conceals a body, clothing, or any articles upon or near the body or who obtains or collects physical or biological evidence in violation of this subsection or chapter 691 is guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

2. It is unlawful to embalm a body when the embalmer has reason to believe death occurred in a manner specified in section 331.802, subsection 3, when there is evidence sufficient to arouse suspicion of crime in connection with the cause of death of the deceased, or where it is the duty of a medical examiner to view the body and investigate the death of the deceased person, until the permission of a county medical examiner has been obtained. When feasible, the body shall be released to the funeral director for embalming within twenty-four hours of death.

3. a. It is unlawful to cremate, bury, or send out of the state the body of a deceased person when death occurred in a manner specified in section 331.802, subsection 3, until a medical examiner certifies in writing that the examiner has viewed the body, has made personal inquiry into the cause and manner of death, and all necessary autopsy or postmortem examinations have been completed. However, the body of a deceased person may be sent out of state for the purpose of an autopsy or postmortem examination if the county medical examiner certifies in writing that the out-of-state autopsy or postmortem examination is necessary or, in the case of a death which is not of public interest as specified in section 331.802, subsection 3, if the attending physician certifies to the county medical examiner that the performance of the autopsy out of state is proper.

b. If the person authorized to control the remains of a deceased person under section 144C.5 has requested that the body of the deceased person be cremated, a permit for cremation must be obtained from a medical examiner. Cremation permits by the medical examiner must be made on the most current forms prepared at the direction of and approved by the state medical examiner, with copies forwarded to the state medical examiner's office. Costs for the cremation permit issued by a medical examiner shall not exceed seventy-five dollars. The costs of the permit and other reasonable cremation expenses may be paid from the decedent's estate pursuant to section 633.425, subsection 3.

4. A person who violates a provision of subsection 2 or 3 is guilty of a serious misdemeanor.

[C62, 66, §339.12; C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §339.9, 339.13; S81, §331.805; 81 Acts, ch 117, §804]

89 Acts, ch 81, §1; 96 Acts, ch 1148, §11; 2002 Acts, ch 1098, §5; 2005 Acts, ch 89, §37; 2008 Acts, ch 1051, §20, 22

Referred to in §141A.5