

**524.810A Safe deposit box access.**

1. A bank shall permit a person named in and authorized by a court order to open, examine, and remove the contents of a safe deposit box located at the bank. If a court order has not been delivered to the bank, the following persons may access and remove any or all contents of a safe deposit box located at a state bank which box is described in an ownership or rental agreement or lease between the state bank and a deceased owner or lessee:

a. A co-owner or co-lessee of the safe deposit box.

b. A person designated in the safe deposit box agreement or lease to have access to the safe deposit box upon the death of the lessee, to the extent provided in the safe deposit box agreement or lease.

c. An executor or administrator of the estate of a deceased owner or lessee upon delivery to the state bank of a certified copy of letters of appointment.

d. A person named as an executor in a copy of a purported will produced by the person, provided such access shall be limited to the removal of a purported will, and no other contents shall be removed.

e. A trustee of a trust created by the deceased owner or lessee upon delivery to the state bank of either of the following:

(1) A certification of trust pursuant to [section 633A.4604](#) which certifies that the trust property is reasonably believed to include property in the safe deposit box.

(2) A copy of the trust with an affidavit by the trustee which certifies that a copy of the trust delivered to the state bank with the affidavit is an accurate and complete copy of the trust, that the trustee is the duly authorized and acting trustee under the trust, that the trust property is reasonably believed to include property in the safe deposit box, and that, to the knowledge of the trustee, the trust has not been revoked.

2. A person removing any contents of a safe deposit box pursuant to [subsection 1](#) shall deliver any writing purported to be a will of the decedent to the court having jurisdiction over the decedent's estate.

3. a. If a person authorized to have access under [subsection 1](#) does not request access to the safe deposit box within the thirty-day period immediately following the date of death of the owner or lessee of a safe deposit box, and the state bank has knowledge of the death of the owner or lessee of the safe deposit box, the safe deposit box may be opened by or in the presence of two employees of the state bank. If no key is produced, the state bank may cause the safe deposit box to be opened and the state bank shall have a claim against the estate of the deceased owner or lessee and a lien upon the contents of the safe deposit box for the costs of opening and resealing the safe deposit box.

b. If a safe deposit box is opened pursuant to paragraph "a", the bank employees present at such opening shall do all of the following:

(1) Remove any purported will of the deceased owner or lessee.

(2) Unseal, copy, and retain in the records of the state bank a copy of a purported will removed from the safe deposit box. An additional copy of such purported will shall be made, dated, and signed by the bank employees present at the safe deposit box opening and placed in the safe deposit box. The safe deposit box shall then be resealed.

(3) The original of a purported will shall be sent by registered or certified mail or personally delivered to the district court in the county of the last known residence of the deceased owner or lessee, or the court having jurisdiction over the testator's estate. If the residence is unknown or last known and not in this state, the purported will shall be sent by registered or certified mail or personally delivered to the district court in the county where the safe deposit box is located.

4. The state bank may rely upon published information or other reasonable proof of death of an owner or lessee. A state bank has no duty to inquire about or discover, and is not liable to any person for failure to inquire about or discover, the death of the owner or lessee of a safe deposit box. A state bank has no duty to open or cause to be opened, and is not liable to any person for failure to open or cause to be opened, a safe deposit box of a deceased owner or lessee. Upon compliance with the requirements of [subsection 1 or 3](#), the state bank is not

liable to any person as a result of the opening of the safe deposit box, removal and delivery of the purported will, or retention of the unopened safe deposit box and contents.

[99 Acts, ch 148, §1](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1102, §1, 2](#); [2005 Acts, ch 38, §55](#)

Referred to in [§524.108](#)