

641—97.14(144) Disinterment permits.

97.14(1) A disinterment permit may be issued as follows:

- a.* Disinterment of a dead human body or fetus, without a court order, shall be allowed for the purpose of autopsy or reburial only, and then only if supervised by a funeral director.
- b.* Disinterment of cremated remains, without a court order, shall be allowed, but only if supervised by a funeral director.
- c.* The state registrar, without a court order, shall not issue a permit without the consent of the person authorized to control the decedent's remains under Iowa Code section 144C.5.
- d.* Disinterment of a dead body or fetus for the purpose of reburial may be allowed by court order only upon a showing of substantial benefit to the public, and then only if supervised by a funeral director.
- e.* Disinterment of a dead body or fetus for the purpose of autopsy by court order shall be allowed only when reasonable cause is shown that someone is criminally or civilly responsible for such death, after hearing, upon reasonable notice prescribed by the court to the person authorized to control the decedent's remains under Iowa Code section 144C.5, and then only if supervised by a funeral director.
- f.* Disinterment of a dead body or fetus for the purpose of cremation may be allowed by court order if supervised by a funeral director. Subsequent to the disinterment, cremation of the body shall only be allowed upon a determination by the state or county medical examiner that the death was due to natural causes.

97.14(2) A permit for disinterment shall be issued by the state registrar according to rules adopted pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 17A or when ordered by the district court of the county in which such body is buried. A person authorized to control final disposition of a decedent's remains under Iowa Code section 144C.5 is an interested person and shall be entitled to notice prior to the obtaining of a court order.

97.14(3) Disinterment permits shall be required for any relocation aboveground or belowground of remains from the original site of interment. Disinterment permits shall be valid for 30 days after the date the permit is signed by the state registrar. Disinterment permits are issued on a form as prescribed by the state registrar with copies to be distributed as follows:

- a.* One copy filed with the sexton or person in charge of the cemetery in which disinterment is to be made;
- b.* One copy to be used during transportation of the remains;
- c.* One copy filed with the sexton or person in charge of the cemetery of reburial; and
- d.* One copy to be returned to the state registrar by the funeral director within ten days after the date of disinterment.

97.14(4) When removed from the vault for final burial, a dead human body or fetus, properly embalmed and placed in a receiving vault, shall not be considered a disinterment.

97.14(5) The following persons who are competent adults may acquire a disinterment permit without a court order pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.34 as amended by 2020 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2135, and section 144C.5 in the following descending order:

- a.* A designee, or alternate designee, acting pursuant to the decedent's declaration.
- b.* The surviving spouse of the decedent, if not legally separated from the decedent, whose whereabouts are reasonably ascertainable.
- c.* A surviving child of the decedent or, if there is more than one surviving child, a majority of the surviving children whose whereabouts are reasonably ascertainable.
- d.* The surviving parent or parents of the decedent whose whereabouts are reasonably ascertainable.
- e.* A surviving grandchild of the decedent or, if there is more than one surviving grandchild, a majority of the surviving grandchildren whose whereabouts are reasonably ascertainable.
- f.* A surviving sibling of the decedent or, if there is more than one surviving sibling, a majority of the surviving siblings whose whereabouts are reasonably ascertainable.
- g.* A surviving grandparent of the decedent or, if there is more than one surviving grandparent, a majority of the surviving grandparents whose whereabouts are reasonably ascertainable.
- h.* A person in the next degree of kinship to the decedent in the order named by law to inherit the estate of the decedent under the rules of inheritance for intestate succession or, if there is more than

one such surviving person, a majority of such surviving persons whose whereabouts are reasonably ascertainable.

i. A person who represents that the person knows the identity of the decedent and who signs an affidavit warranting the identity of the decedent and assuming the right to control final disposition of the decedent's remains and the responsibility to pay any expense attendant to such final disposition. A person who warrants the identity of the decedent pursuant to this paragraph is liable for all damages that result, directly or indirectly, from that warrant.

j. The county medical examiner, if responsible for the decedent's remains.

97.14(6) A funeral director may await a court order before proceeding with disinterment of a decedent's remains if the funeral director is aware of a dispute among:

- a.* Persons who are members of the same class of persons described in subrule 97.14(5); or
- b.* Persons who are authorized under subrule 97.14(5) and the executor named in the decedent's will or personal representative appointed by the court.

97.14(7) Due consideration under this rule shall be given to the public health, the preferences of a person authorized to control final disposition of a decedent's remains under Iowa Code section 144C.5, and any court order.

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