

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

TITLE 8. DEATH AND DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

SUBTITLE B. DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

CHAPTER 691. ANATOMICAL BOARD OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

SUBCHAPTER A. ORGANIZATION OF ANATOMICAL BOARD OF THE STATE OF
TEXAS

Sec. 691.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Board" means the Anatomical Board of the State of Texas.

(2) "Body" means a human corpse.

(3) "Anatomical specimen" means a part of a human corpse.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 691.002. COMPOSITION OF BOARD. (a) The Anatomical Board of the State of Texas is composed of one representative from each school or college of chiropractic, osteopathy, medicine, or dentistry incorporated in this state.

(b) On March 1 of each odd-numbered year, the chief executive officer of each institution described by Subsection (a) shall appoint as the institution's representative on the board one professor of surgery or of basic anatomical sciences who is associated with the institution.

(c) Appointments to the board shall be made without regard to the race, creed, sex, religion, or national origin of the appointees.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.003. SUNSET PROVISION. The Anatomical Board of the State of Texas is subject to Chapter [325](#), Government Code (Texas Sunset Act). Unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter, the board is abolished September 1, 2023.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 596 (S.B. [619](#)), Sec. 1.02, eff. June 10, 2019.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 850 (S.B. 713), Sec. 1.03, eff. June 16, 2021.

Sec. 691.004. LOBBYIST RESTRICTIONS. A person may not serve as a member of the board or act as the general counsel to the board if the person is required to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305, Government Code, because of the person's activities for compensation on behalf of a profession related to the operation of the board.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.005. REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBER. (a) It is a ground for removal from the board if a member:

(1) does not have at the time of appointment the qualifications required by Section 691.002(a) for appointment to the board;

(2) does not maintain during the service on the board the qualifications required by Section 691.002(a) for appointment to the board;

(3) violates a prohibition established by Section 691.004;

(4) cannot discharge the member's duties for a substantial portion of the term for which the member is appointed because of illness or disability; or

(5) is absent from more than half of the regularly scheduled board meetings that the member is eligible to attend during any two calendar years, unless the absence is excused by a majority of the board members.

(b) The validity of an action of the board is not affected by the fact that it is taken when a ground for removal of a member of the board exists.

(c) If the secretary-treasurer of the board believes that a potential ground for removal exists, the secretary-treasurer shall notify the chairman of the board of that ground. The chairman shall notify the chief executive officer of the institution represented by that member that a potential ground for removal exists.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.006. REIMBURSEMENT. A board member is not entitled to compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for actual travel expenses incurred in serving on the board.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.007. MINUTES; RECORDS. (a) The board may adopt rules for its administration.

(b) The board shall keep complete minutes of its transactions.

(c) The board shall keep identification records of each body donated to the board and of each body or anatomical specimen distributed by the board.

(d) A board member or a district or county attorney may at any time inspect minutes or records required under this section.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 691.008. FEES; AUDITS. (a) The board may set and collect reasonable and necessary fees for receiving and distributing bodies and anatomical specimens.

(b) The secretary-treasurer of the board may deposit fees collected under this section in local accounts outside the state treasury.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1083, Sec. 25(99), eff. June 17, 2011.

(d) The financial transactions of the board are subject to audit by the state auditor in accordance with Chapter 321, Government Code.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 210, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1083 (S.B. 1179), Sec. 25(99), eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 161 (S.B. 1093), Sec. 10.005,

eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 691.009. INFORMATION TO MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES. The board shall provide to its members and employees, as often as necessary, information regarding their qualifications under this chapter and their responsibilities under applicable laws relating to standards of conduct for state officers or employees. Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.010. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION; COMPLAINTS. (a) The board shall prepare information of public interest describing the functions of the board and the board's procedures by which complaints are filed with and resolved by the board. The board shall make the information available to the public and appropriate state agencies.

(b) The board by rule shall establish methods by which service recipients can be notified of the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the board for the purpose of directing complaints to the board. The board may provide for that notification by including the information on each written contract relating to bodies willed or donated to an entity regulated by the board or authorized by the board to receive bodies.

(c) The board shall keep an information file about each complaint filed with the board relating to its functions. If a written complaint is filed with the board relating to a person or an entity regulated by the board, the board, at least as frequently as quarterly and until final disposition of the complaint, shall notify the parties to the complaint of the status of the complaint unless notice would jeopardize an undercover investigation.

(d) The board shall develop and implement policies that provide the public with a reasonable opportunity to appear before the board and to speak on any issue under the jurisdiction of the board.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

SUBCHAPTER B. DONATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF BODIES AND ANATOMICAL
SPECIMENS

Sec. 691.021. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "political subdivision" means a municipality, county, or special district. Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.022. GENERAL DUTIES. (a) The board shall distribute bodies and anatomical specimens to institutions and other persons authorized to receive them.

(b) The board shall adopt rules to ensure that each body and anatomical specimen in the custody of the board or an institution represented on the board is treated with respect.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. [1214](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.0225. INFORMATIONAL DOCUMENT. The board shall develop a document to inform a person making a gift of a decedent's body or anatomical specimen for purposes of education, including forensic science education, or research of the risks and benefits associated with donation. The board shall make the document available on the board's Internet website.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 875 (S.B. [187](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. [1214](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.023. DUTY TO DELIVER CERTAIN BODIES TO BOARD.

(a) An officer, employee, or representative of the state, of a political subdivision, or of an institution having charge or control of a body not claimed for burial or a body required to be buried at public expense shall:

(1) notify the board or the board's representative of the body's existence when the body comes into the person's possession, charge, or control if notified in writing to do so by

the board or the board's representative;

(2) deliver the body in accordance with the direction of the board; and

(3) allow the board, the board's representative, or a physician designated by the board who complies with this chapter to remove the body to be used for the advancement of medical or forensic science.

(b) If the board does not require a political subdivision or agency of the political subdivision to deliver a body under this section, the political subdivision shall pay all costs of preparation for burial, including costs of embalming.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. [1214](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.024. PERSONS WHO MAY CLAIM BODY FOR BURIAL. (a) An officer, employee, or representative of the state, of a political subdivision, or of an institution is not required to give notice or deliver a body as required by Section [691.023](#) if the body is claimed for burial.

(b) A relative, bona fide friend, or representative of an organization to which the deceased belonged may claim the body for burial. The person in charge of the body shall release the body to the claimant without requiring payment when the person is satisfied that the claimed relationship exists.

(c) A claimant alleging to be a bona fide friend or a representative of an organization to which the deceased belonged must present a written statement of the relationship under which the claimant qualifies as a bona fide friend or organization representative.

(d) For purposes of this section, a bona fide friend means a person who is like one of the family, and does not include:

(1) an ordinary acquaintance;

(2) an officer, employee, or representative of the state, of a political subdivision, or of an institution having charge of a body not claimed for burial or a body required to be

buried at public expense;

(3) an employee of an entity listed in Subdivision (2) with which the deceased was associated; or

(4) a patient, inmate, or ward of an institution with which the deceased was associated.

(e) A person covered by Subsection (d) may qualify as a bona fide friend if the friendship existed before the deceased entered the institution.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.025. PROCEDURE AFTER DEATH. (a) If a body is not claimed for burial immediately after death, the body shall be embalmed within 24 hours.

(b) For 72 hours after death, the person in charge of the institution having charge or control of the body shall make due effort to find a relative of the deceased and notify the relative of the death. If the person is not able to find a relative, the person shall file with the county clerk an affidavit stating that the person has made a diligent inquiry to find a relative and stating the inquiry the person made.

(c) A body that is not claimed for burial within 48 hours after a relative receives notification shall be delivered as soon as possible to the board or the board's representative.

(d) A relative of the deceased may claim the body within 60 days after the body has been delivered to an institution or other entity authorized to receive the body. The body shall be released without charge.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.026. BODY OF TRAVELER. If an unclaimed body is the body of a traveler who died suddenly, the board shall direct the institution or other person receiving the body to retain the body for six months for purposes of identification.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. [1214](#)), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.027. AUTOPSY. Only the board may grant permission to perform an autopsy on an unclaimed body. The board may grant permission after receiving a specific request for an autopsy that shows sufficient evidence of medical urgency.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.028. DONATION OF BODY BY WRITTEN INSTRUMENT.

(a) An adult living in this state who is of sound mind may donate the adult's body by will or other written instrument to the board, a medical or dental school, or another donee authorized by the board, to be used for the advancement of medical or forensic science.

(b) To be effective, the donor must sign the will or other written instrument and it must be witnessed by two adults. The donor is not required to use a particular form or particular words in making the donation, but the will or other instrument must clearly convey the donor's intent.

(c) Appointment of an administrator or executor or acquisition of a court order is not necessary before the body may be delivered under this chapter.

(d) A donor may revoke a donation made under this section by executing a written instrument in a manner similar to the original donation.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. [1214](#)), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.029. AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT BODIES FROM OUTSIDE THE STATE. The board may receive a body transported to the board from outside this state.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 691.030. BOARD'S AUTHORITY TO DISTRIBUTE BODIES AND ANATOMICAL SPECIMENS. (a) The board or the board's representative shall distribute bodies donated to it and may redistribute bodies

donated to medical or dental schools or other donees authorized by the board to:

- (1) schools and colleges of chiropractic, osteopathy, medicine, or dentistry incorporated in this state;
- (2) forensic science programs;
- (3) search and rescue organizations or recovery teams that are recognized by the board, are exempt from federal taxation under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and use human remains detection canines with the authorization of a local or county law enforcement agency;
- (4) physicians; and
- (5) other persons as provided by this section.

(b) In making the distribution, the board shall give priority to the schools and colleges that need bodies for lectures and demonstrations.

(c) If the board has remaining bodies, the board or the board's representative shall distribute or redistribute those bodies to the schools and colleges proportionately and equitably according to the number of students in each school or college receiving instruction or demonstration in normal or morbid anatomy and operative surgery. The dean of each school or college shall certify that number to the board when required by the board.

(d) The board may transport a body or anatomical specimen to an authorized recipient in another state if the board determines that the supply of bodies or anatomical specimens in this state exceeds the need for bodies or anatomical specimens in this state and if:

(1) the deceased donated his body in compliance with Section [691.028](#) and at the time of the donation authorized the board to transport the body outside this state; or

(2) the body was donated in compliance with Chapter [692A](#) and the person authorized to make the donation under Section [692A.009](#) authorized the board to transport the body outside this state.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 186 (H.B. 2027), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. 1214), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.031. TRANSPORTATION OF BODIES; RECORDS. (a) The board shall adopt rules to ensure that:

(1) each body or anatomical specimen received or distributed by the board is properly transported;

(2) a label with the statement "CONTENTS DERIVED FROM DONATED HUMAN TISSUE" is affixed to the container in which the body or anatomical specimen is transported; and

(3) each person who has control or possession of a body or anatomical specimen:

(A) satisfactorily completes the information required on a chain-of-custody form prescribed by the board;

(B) maintains a copy of the form for the person's records; and

(C) transfers the form to any other person to whom control or possession of the body or anatomical specimen is transferred.

(b) The board may employ a public carrier to transport bodies or anatomical specimens received or distributed by the board.

(c) Each body or anatomical specimen shall be carefully deposited and transported with the least possible public display.

(d) A person or institution who sends a body or anatomical specimen under this chapter shall keep on permanent file a description of the body or anatomical specimen that includes the deceased's name, if known, color, sex, age, place and supposed cause of death, and any other information available for identification of the body or anatomical specimen, such as the existence of scars or deformities.

(e) The sender shall mail or otherwise safely convey to the person or institution to whom the body is sent a copy of the description required by Subsection (d). The person or institution receiving the body or anatomical specimen shall immediately and

safely transmit to the sender a receipt containing the full terms of the description furnished by the sender.

(f) The sender and receiver of each body or anatomical specimen shall file the records required under this section in accordance with board rules so that the board or a district or county attorney may inspect the records at any time.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 875 (S.B. 187), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 691.032. COSTS OF DISTRIBUTION. A person or institution receiving a body or anatomical specimen under this chapter shall pay in a manner specified by the board, or as otherwise agreed on, all costs incurred in distributing the body or anatomical specimen so that the state, a county, a municipality, or an officer, employee, or representative of the state, a county, or a municipality does not incur any expense.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 691.033. USE OF BODIES AND ANATOMICAL SPECIMENS.

(a) To further medical or forensic science, a school, college, or person designated by the board may use, dissect, operate on, examine, and experiment on a body or anatomical specimen distributed under this chapter.

(b) A school, college, or person shall keep a permanent record of each body or anatomical specimen received from the board or the board's representative. The record must be sufficient to identify the body or anatomical specimen and may be inspected by the board or the board's representative.

(c) A law relating to the prevention of mutilation of a body does not apply to the use of a body as authorized under this section or a dissection, operation, examination, or experiment performed under this section.

(d) To aid prosecutions under Section 42.08, Penal Code, the

board shall adopt rules that clearly state the activities that are authorized by the board in relation to the use or dissection of a body.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 14.42, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. [1214](#)), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.034. REGULATION OF PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS USING BODIES AND ANATOMICAL SPECIMENS. (a) The board shall inspect and may approve institutions and other persons for the receipt and use of bodies and anatomical specimens under this chapter.

(b) The board may investigate a person or institution if the board has reason to believe that the person or institution has improperly used a body or anatomical specimen.

(c) The board may suspend or revoke a person's or institution's authorization to receive and use or dissect bodies or anatomical specimens if the board determines that the person or institution has improperly used a body or anatomical specimen.

(d) A person or institution is entitled to a hearing before the board or a hearing examiner appointed by the board before the board may revoke the person's or institution's authorization to receive and use or dissect bodies or anatomical specimens. The board shall make all final decisions to suspend or revoke an authorization.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 948, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 624 (S.B. [1214](#)), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 691.035. CRIMINAL PENALTY. (a) A person commits an offense if the person has a duty imposed under this chapter and refuses, neglects, or omits to perform the duty as required by this chapter.

(b) An offense under this section is punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 or more than \$500.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.