

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

TITLE 8. DEATH AND DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

SUBTITLE C. CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIES

CHAPTER 711. GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO CEMETERIES

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 711.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Abandoned cemetery" means a cemetery, regardless of whether it appears on a map or in deed records, that is not owned or operated by a cemetery organization, does not have another person legally responsible for its care, and is not maintained by any person.

(2) "Burial park" means a tract of land that is used or intended to be used for interment in graves.

(3) "Campus" means the area:

(A) within the boundaries of one or more adjacent tracts, parcels, or lots under common ownership;

(B) on which the principal church building and related structures and facilities of an organized religious society or sect are located; and

(C) that may be subject to one or more easements for street, utility, or pipeline purposes.

(4) "Cemetery" means a place that is used or intended to be used for interment, and includes a graveyard, burial park, mausoleum, or any other area containing one or more graves.

(5) "Cemetery element" means a grave, memorial, crypt, mausoleum, columbarium, or other item that is associated with the cemetery, including a fence, road, curb, wall, path, gate, or bench and the lighting and landscaping.

(6) "Cemetery broker" means a person who sells the exclusive right of sepulture for another person. The term does not include a person who:

(A) is an officer, agent, or employee of the cemetery organization in which the plot is located, acting at the direction or under the control of the cemetery organization; or

(B) originally purchased the exclusive right of

sepulture for personal use.

(7) "Cemetery organization" means:

(A) an unincorporated association of plot owners not operated for profit that is authorized by its articles of association to conduct a business for cemetery purposes; or

(B) a corporation, as defined by Section [712.001\(b\)\(3\)](#), that is authorized by its certificate of formation or its registration to conduct a business for cemetery purposes.

(8) "Cemetery purpose" means a purpose necessary or incidental to establishing, maintaining, managing, operating, improving, or conducting a cemetery, interring remains, or caring for, preserving, and embellishing cemetery property.

(9) "Columbarium" means a durable, fireproof structure, or a room or other space in a durable, fireproof structure, containing niches and used or intended to be used to contain cremated remains.

(10) "Cremains receptacle" means a marker, boulder, bench, pedestal, pillar, or other aboveground vessel that contains niches for cremated remains.

(11) "Cremated remains" or "cremains" means the bone fragments remaining after the cremation process, which may include the residue of any foreign materials that were cremated with the human remains.

(12) "Cremation" means the irreversible process of reducing human remains to bone fragments through extreme heat and evaporation, which may include the processing or the pulverization of bone fragments.

(13) "Crematory" means a structure containing a furnace used or intended to be used for the cremation of human remains.

(14) "Crematory and columbarium" means a durable, fireproof structure containing both a crematory and columbarium.

(15) "Crypt" means a chamber in a mausoleum of sufficient size to inter human remains.

(16) "Directors" means the governing body of a cemetery organization.

(17) "Entombment" means interment in a crypt.

(18) "Funeral establishment" means a place of business used in the care and preparation for interment or transportation of human remains, or any place where one or more persons, either as sole owner, in copartnership, or through corporate status, are engaged or represent themselves to be engaged in the business of embalming or funeral directing.

(19) "Grave" means a space of ground that contains interred human remains or is in a burial park and that is used or intended to be used for interment of human remains in the ground.

(20) "Human remains" means the body of a decedent.

(21) "Interment" means the permanent disposition of remains by entombment, burial, or placement in a niche.

(22) "Interment right" means the right to inter the remains of one decedent in a plot.

(23) "Inurnment" means the placement of cremated remains in an urn.

(24) "Lawn crypt" means a subsurface receptacle installed in multiple units for ground burial of human remains.

(25) "Mausoleum" means a durable, fireproof structure used or intended to be used for entombment.

(26) "Memorial" means a headstone, tombstone, gravestone, monument, or other marker denoting a grave.

(27) "Niche" means a space in a columbarium or cremains receptacle used or intended to be used for the placement of cremated remains in an urn or other container.

(28) "Nonperpetual care cemetery" means a cemetery that is not a perpetual care cemetery.

(29) "Perpetual care" or "endowment care" means the maintenance, repair, and care of all places in the cemetery.

(30) "Perpetual care cemetery" or "endowment care cemetery" means a cemetery for the benefit of which a perpetual care trust fund is established as provided by Chapter [712](#).

(31) "Plot" means space in a cemetery owned by an individual or organization that is used or intended to be used for interment, including a grave or adjoining graves, a crypt or adjoining crypts, a lawn crypt or adjoining lawn crypts, or a niche or adjoining niches.

(32) "Plot owner" means a person:

(A) in whose name a plot is listed in a cemetery organization's office as the owner of the exclusive right of sepulture; or

(B) who holds, from a cemetery organization, a certificate of ownership or other instrument of conveyance of the exclusive right of sepulture in a particular plot in the organization's cemetery.

(33) "Prepaid funeral contract" means a written contract providing for prearranged or prepaid funeral services or funeral merchandise.

(34) "Remains" means either human remains or cremated remains.

(35) "Unidentified grave" means a grave that is not marked in a manner that provides the identity of the interment.

(36) "Unknown cemetery" means an abandoned cemetery evidenced by the presence of marked or unmarked graves that does not appear on a map or in deed records.

(37) "Unmarked grave" means the immediate area where one or more human interments are found that:

(A) is not in a recognized and maintained cemetery;

(B) is not owned or operated by a cemetery organization;

(C) is not marked by a tomb, monument, gravestone, or other structure or thing placed or designated as a memorial of the dead; or

(D) is located on land designated as agricultural, timber, recreational, park, or scenic land under Chapter 23, Tax Code.

(38) "Unverified cemetery" means a location having some evidence of interment but in which the presence of one or more unmarked graves has not been verified by a person described by Section 711.0105(a) or by the Texas Historical Commission.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 212, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1997,

75th Leg., ch. 1389, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 106 (S.B. 350), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. 2927), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 532 (H.B. 2495), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1336 (S.B. 1167), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 123 (S.B. 661), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. 1630), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. 614), Sec. 38, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.002. DISPOSITION OF REMAINS; DUTY TO INTER.

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (1), unless a decedent has left directions in writing for the disposition of the decedent's remains as provided in Subsection (g), the following persons, in the priority listed, have the right to control the disposition, including cremation, of the decedent's remains, shall inter the remains, and in accordance with Subsection (a-3) are liable for the reasonable cost of interment:

(1) the person designated in a written instrument signed by the decedent;

(2) the decedent's surviving spouse;

(3) any one of the decedent's surviving adult children;

(4) either one of the decedent's surviving parents;

(5) any one of the decedent's surviving adult siblings;

(6) any one or more of the duly qualified executors or administrators of the decedent's estate; or

(7) any adult person in the next degree of kinship in the order named by law to inherit the estate of the decedent.

(a-1) If the person with the right to control the disposition of the decedent's remains fails to make final arrangements or appoint another person to make final arrangements for the disposition before the earlier of the 6th day after the date the person received notice of the decedent's death or the 10th day after the date the decedent died, the person is presumed to be unable or unwilling to control the disposition, and:

(1) the person's right to control the disposition is terminated; and

(2) the right to control the disposition is passed to the following persons in the following priority:

(A) any other person in the same priority class under Subsection (a) as the person whose right was terminated; or

(B) a person in a different priority class, in the priority listed in Subsection (a).

(a-2) If a United States Department of Defense Record of Emergency Data, DD Form 93, or a successor form, was in effect at the time of death for a decedent who died in a manner described by 10 U.S.C. Sections 1481(a)(1) through (8), the DD Form 93 controls over any other written instrument described by Subsection (a)(1) or (g) with respect to designating a person to control the disposition of the decedent's remains. Notwithstanding Subsections (b) and (c), the form is legally sufficient if it is properly completed, signed by the decedent, and witnessed in the manner required by the form.

(a-3) A person exercising the right to control the disposition of remains under Subsection (a), other than a duly qualified executor or administrator of the decedent's estate, is liable for the reasonable cost of interment and may seek reimbursement for that cost from the decedent's estate. When an executor or administrator exercises the right to control the disposition of remains under Subsection (a)(6), the decedent's estate is liable for the reasonable cost of interment, and the executor or administrator is not individually liable for that cost.

(b) The written instrument referred to in Subsection (a)(1) may be in substantially the following form:

APPOINTMENT FOR DISPOSITION OF REMAINS

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

(your name and address)

being of sound mind, willfully and voluntarily make known my desire that, upon my death, the disposition of my remains shall be controlled by \_\_\_\_\_

(name of agent)

in accordance with Sections 711.002 and 711.004, Health and Safety Code, and, with respect to that subject only, I hereby appoint such person as my agent (attorney-in-fact).

All decisions made by my agent with respect to the disposition of my remains, including cremation, shall be binding.

SPECIAL DIRECTIONS:

Set forth below are any special directions limiting the power granted to my agent:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

AGENT:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

SUCCESSORS:

If my agent or a successor agent dies, becomes legally disabled, resigns, or refuses to act, or if my marriage to my agent or successor agent is dissolved by divorce, annulled, or declared void before my death and this instrument does not state that the agent or successor agent continues to serve after my marriage to that agent or successor agent is dissolved by divorce, annulled, or declared void, I hereby appoint the following persons (each to act alone and successively, in the order named) to serve as my agent (attorney-in-fact) to control the disposition of my remains as authorized by this document:

- 1. First Successor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Second Successor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

DURATION:

This appointment becomes effective upon my death.

PRIOR APPOINTMENTS REVOKED:

I hereby revoke any prior appointment of any person to control the disposition of my remains.

RELIANCE:

I hereby agree that any cemetery organization, business operating a crematory or columbarium or both, funeral director or embalmer, or funeral establishment who receives a copy of this document may act under it. Any modification or revocation of this document is not effective as to any such party until that party receives actual notice of the modification or revocation. No such party shall be liable because of reliance on a copy of this document.

ASSUMPTION:

THE AGENT, AND EACH SUCCESSOR AGENT, BY ACCEPTING THIS APPOINTMENT, ASSUMES THE OBLIGATIONS PROVIDED IN, AND IS BOUND BY THE PROVISIONS OF, SECTIONS 711.002 AND 711.004, HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE.

SIGNATURES:

This written instrument and my appointments of an agent and any successor agent in this instrument are valid without the signature of my agent and any successor agents below. Each agent, or a successor agent, acting pursuant to this appointment must indicate acceptance of the appointment by signing below before acting as my agent.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(your signature)

State of \_\_\_\_\_

County of \_\_\_\_\_

This document was acknowledged before me on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) by  
\_\_\_\_\_ (name of principal).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of notarial officer)

(Seal, if any, of notary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(printed name)

My commission expires:  
\_\_\_\_\_

ACCEPTANCE AND ASSUMPTION BY AGENT:

I have no knowledge of or any reason to believe this Appointment for Disposition of Remains has been revoked. I hereby accept the appointment made in this instrument with the understanding that I will be individually liable for the reasonable cost of the decedent's interment, for which I may seek reimbursement from the decedent's estate.

Acceptance of Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(signature of agent)

Date of Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptance of Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(signature of first successor)

Date of Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptance of Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(signature of second successor)

Date of Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(c) A written instrument is legally sufficient under Subsection (a)(1) if the instrument designates a person to control the disposition of the decedent's remains, the instrument is signed by the decedent, the signature of the decedent is acknowledged, and the agent or successor agent signs the instrument before acting as the decedent's agent. Unless the instrument provides otherwise, the designation of the decedent's spouse as an agent or successor agent in the instrument is revoked when the marriage of the decedent and the spouse appointed as an agent or successor agent is dissolved by divorce, annulled, or declared void before the decedent's death. Such written instrument may be modified or revoked only by a subsequent written instrument that complies with this subsection.

(d) A person listed in Subsection (a) has the right, duty, and liability provided by that subsection only if there is no person in a priority listed before the person.

(e) If there is no person with the duty to inter under Subsection (a) and:

(1) an inquest is held, the person conducting the inquest shall inter the remains; and

(2) an inquest is not held, the county in which the death occurred shall inter the remains.

(f) A person who represents that the person knows the identity of a decedent and, in order to procure the disposition, including cremation, of the decedent's remains, signs an order or statement, other than a death certificate, warrants the identity of the decedent and is liable for all damages that result, directly or indirectly, from that warrant.

(g) A person may provide written directions for the disposition, including cremation, of the person's remains in a will, a prepaid funeral contract, or a written instrument signed and acknowledged by such person. A party to the prepaid funeral contract or a written contract providing for all or some of a decedent's funeral arrangements who fails to honor the contract is liable for the additional expenses incurred in the disposition of the decedent's remains as a result of the breach of contract. The directions may govern the inscription to be placed on a grave marker attached to any plot in which the decedent had the right of sepulture at the time of death and in which plot the decedent is subsequently interred. The directions may be modified or revoked only by a subsequent writing signed and acknowledged by such person. The person otherwise entitled to control the disposition of a decedent's remains under this section shall faithfully carry out the directions of the decedent to the extent that the decedent's estate or the person controlling the disposition are financially able to do so.

(h) If the directions are in a will, they shall be carried out immediately without the necessity of probate. If the will is not probated or is declared invalid for testamentary purposes, the directions are valid to the extent to which they have been acted on

in good faith.

(i) A cemetery organization, a business operating a crematory or columbarium or both, a funeral director or an embalmer, or a funeral establishment shall not be liable for carrying out the written directions of a decedent or the directions of any person who represents that the person is entitled to control the disposition of the decedent's remains.

(j) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 707, Sec. 3, eff. June 17, 2011.

(k) Any dispute among any of the persons listed in Subsection (a) concerning their right to control the disposition, including cremation, of a decedent's remains shall be resolved by a court with jurisdiction over probate proceedings for the decedent, regardless of whether a probate proceeding has been initiated. A cemetery organization or funeral establishment shall not be liable for refusing to accept the decedent's remains, or to inter or otherwise dispose of the decedent's remains, until it receives a court order or other suitable confirmation that the dispute has been resolved or settled.

(l) A person listed in Subsection (a) may not control the disposition of the decedent's remains if:

(1) in connection with the decedent's death, the person has been arrested or an arrest warrant has been issued for the person for a crime under Chapter 19, Penal Code, that involves family violence against the decedent; or

(2) the decedent had filed an application for a protective order against or with respect to the person under Subchapter A, Chapter 7B, Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 17.292, Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 6.504, Family Code, or Subtitle B, Title 4, Family Code, or an order has been issued against or with respect to the person under one of those provisions.

(l-1) A person regulated under Chapter 651, Occupations Code, who knowingly allows a person described by Subsection (l) to control the disposition of the decedent's remains in violation of that subsection commits a prohibited practice under Section 651.460, Occupations Code, and the Texas Funeral Service Commission may take disciplinary action or assess an administrative penalty

against the regulated person under that chapter.

(1-2) A court with jurisdiction over probate proceedings shall expedite the proceedings to resolve any dispute over the right to control the disposition of a decedent's remains among the persons listed in Subsection (a) if the dispute involves the control of the disposition of the remains by a prohibited person described by Subsection (1).

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 213, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 967, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1385, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 30, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 95 (H.B. 74), Sec. 1, eff. May 20, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 532 (H.B. 2495), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 707 (H.B. 549), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 707 (H.B. 549), Sec. 3, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1336 (S.B. 1167), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 161 (S.B. 1093), Sec. 22.001(28), eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 619 (S.B. 988), Sec. 2, eff. June 16, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1103 (H.B. 3070), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 807 (H.B. 2248), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 284 (S.B. 1300), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 737 (H.B. 3161), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 768 (H.B. 4595), Sec. 11.004, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 711.003. RECORDS OF INTERMENT. A record shall be kept of each interment in a cemetery. The record must include:

- (1) the date the remains are received;
- (2) the date the remains are interred;
- (3) the name and age of the person interred if those facts can be conveniently obtained; and
- (4) the identity of the plot in which the remains are interred.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 711.004. REMOVAL OF REMAINS. (a) Remains interred in a cemetery may be removed from a plot in the cemetery with the written consent of the cemetery organization operating the cemetery and the written consent of the current plot owner or owners and the following persons, in the priority listed:

- (1) the person designated in a written instrument signed by the decedent, as described by Section 711.002(a)(1);
- (2) the decedent's surviving spouse;
- (3) any one of the decedent's surviving adult children;
- (4) either one of the decedent's surviving parents;
- (5) any one of the decedent's surviving adult siblings;
- (6) any one of the duly qualified executors or administrators of the decedent's estate; or
- (7) any adult person in the next degree of kinship in the order named by law to inherit the estate of the decedent.

(b) A person listed in Subsection (a) may consent to the removal only if there is no person in a priority listed before that person.

(c) If the consent required by Subsection (a) cannot be obtained, the remains may be removed by permission of a county court of the county in which the cemetery is located. Before the date of application to the court for permission to remove remains under this subsection, notice must be given to:

(1) the cemetery organization operating the cemetery in which the remains are interred or if the cemetery organization cannot be located or does not exist, the Texas Historical Commission;

(2) each person whose consent is required for removal of the remains under Subsection (a); and

(3) any other person or entity that the court subsequently requires to be served.

(d) For the purposes of Subsection (c) and except as provided by this subsection or Subsection (d-1) or (k), personal notice must be given not later than the 11th day before the date of application to the court for permission to remove the remains, or notice by certified or registered mail must be given not later than the 16th day before the date of application. In an emergency circumstance described by Subsection (1) that necessitates immediate removal of remains from a plot, the court shall hear an application for permission to remove remains under Subsection (c) not later than the first business day after the application is made. In an emergency circumstance described by this subsection, personal notice may be given on the date the application is made.

(d-1) If the court subsequently requires an additional person or entity to be served under Subsection (c)(3), that additional service must be performed not later than the 11th day after the date of the judge's order. Service may not be required for any court appointed representative or other court appointed official.

(e) Subsections (a)-(d) and (k) do not apply to the removal of remains:

(1) from one plot to another plot in the same cemetery, if the cemetery:

(A) is a family, fraternal, or community cemetery that is not larger than 10 acres;

(B) is owned or operated by an unincorporated association of plot owners not operated for profit;

(C) is owned or operated by a church, a religious society or denomination, or an entity solely administering the temporalities of a church or religious society or denomination; or

(D) is a public cemetery owned by this state, a county, or a municipality;

(2) by the cemetery organization from a plot for which the purchase price is past due and unpaid, to another suitable place;

(3) on the order of a court or person who conducts inquests; or

(4) from a plot in a cemetery owned and operated by the Veterans' Land Board.

(f) Except as is authorized for a justice of the peace acting as coroner or medical examiner under Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure, remains may not be removed from a cemetery except on the written order of the state registrar or the state registrar's designee. The cemetery organization shall keep a duplicate copy of the order as part of its records. The Texas Funeral Service Commission may adopt rules to implement this subsection.

(f-1) For unmarked graves contained within an abandoned, unknown, or unverified cemetery, a justice of the peace acting as coroner or medical examiner under Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure, or a person described by Section 711.0105(a) may investigate or remove remains without written order of the state registrar or the state registrar's designee.

(g) A person who removes remains from a cemetery shall keep a record of the removal that includes:

(1) the date the remains are removed;

(2) the name and age at death of the decedent if those facts can be conveniently obtained;

(3) the place to which the remains are removed; and

(4) the cemetery and plot from which the remains are removed.

(h) If the remains are not reinterred, the person who removes the remains shall:

(1) make and keep a record of the disposition of the remains; and

(2) not later than the 30th day after the date the remains are removed, provide notice by certified mail to the Texas

Funeral Service Commission and the Department of State Health Services of the person's intent not to reinter the remains and the reason the remains will not be reinterred.

(i) A person who removes remains from a cemetery shall give the cemetery organization operating the cemetery a copy of the record made as required by Subsections (g) and (h).

(j) A cemetery organization may remove remains from a plot in the cemetery and transfer the remains to another plot in the same cemetery without the written consent required under Subsection (a) if the cemetery seeks consent by sending written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the current owner of the plot from which the remains are to be removed or to the person designated under Subsection (a). The notice must indicate that the remains will be removed, the reason for the removal of the remains, and the proposed location of the reinterment of the remains. The cemetery may transfer the remains to another plot in accordance with this subsection if an objection is not received in response to the notice before the 31st day after the date the notice is sent. A cemetery may not remove remains under this subsection for a fraudulent purpose or to allow the sale of the plot in which the remains are located to another person.

(k) In an emergency circumstance described by Subsection (l) that necessitates immediate removal of remains before the date on which the court is required to hear an application for permission to remove remains under Subsection (d), a cemetery organization may remove remains from a plot in the cemetery and transfer the remains to another plot in the same cemetery without the court hearing. A cemetery association that removes remains under this subsection shall send written notice of the removal by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the person designated under Subsection (a) not later than the fifth day after the date the remains are removed. The notice must indicate that the remains were removed, the reason for the removal of the remains, and the location of the reinterment of the remains.

(l) For purposes of Subsections (d) and (k), "emergency circumstance" means:

- (1) a natural disaster; or

(2) an error in the interment of remains.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 214, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 488, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 504, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 562, Sec. 32, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. [2927](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. [1630](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 807 (H.B. [2248](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 817 (H.B. [2430](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 10, 2019.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 284 (S.B. [1300](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 711.007. NUISANCE; ABATEMENT AND INJUNCTION. (a) A district court of the county in which a cemetery is located may, by order, abate the cemetery as a nuisance and enjoin its continuance if the cemetery is:

(1) maintained, located, or used in violation of this chapter or Chapter [712](#); or

(2) neglected so that it is offensive to the inhabitants of the surrounding section.

(b) The proceeding may be brought by:

(1) the attorney general;

(2) the Banking Commissioner of Texas;

(3) the governing body of a municipality with a population of more than 25,000, if the cemetery is located in the municipality or not farther than five miles from the municipality;

(4) the district attorney of the county, if the cemetery is located in an area of the county not described by Subdivision (3);

(5) the owner of a residence:

(A) in or near the municipality in which the cemetery is located; or

(B) in the area proscribed for the location of a cemetery by Section [711.008](#); or

(6) the owner of a plot in the cemetery.

(c) The court shall grant a permanent injunction against each person responsible for the nuisance if a cemetery nuisance exists or is threatened.

(d) If a cemetery nuisance under Subsection (a)(2) is located in a municipality, the governing body of the municipality may authorize the removal of all bodies, monuments, tombs, or other similar items from the cemetery to a perpetual care cemetery.

(e) Notice of an action under this section must be provided to the Texas Historical Commission and to the county historical commission of the county in which the cemetery is located. The Texas Historical Commission and the county historical commission may intervene and become parties to the suit.

(f) In an action under this section, the court shall determine:

(1) whether the cemetery nuisance must be abated by repair and restoration or by removal of the cemetery; and

(2) the party or parties liable for the costs associated with the abatement.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 562, Sec. 33, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. [2927](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 124 (H.B. [1540](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.008. LOCATION OF CEMETERY. (a) Except as provided by Subsections (b), (f), (g), (g-1), (g-2), (g-3), (g-4), (h), (k), and (m), an individual, corporation, partnership, firm, trust, or association may not establish or operate a cemetery, or use any land for the interment of remains, located:

(1) in or within one mile of the boundaries of a municipality with a population of 5,000 to 25,000;

(2) in or within two miles of the boundaries of a municipality with a population of 25,000 to 50,000;

(3) in or within three miles of the boundaries of a municipality with a population of 50,000 to 100,000;

(4) in or within four miles of the boundaries of a municipality with a population of 100,000 to 200,000; or

(5) in or within five miles of the boundaries of a municipality with a population of at least 200,000.

(b) Subsection (a) does not apply to:

(1) a cemetery heretofore established and operating;

(2) the establishment and use of a columbarium by an organized religious society or sect that is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed under Section 501(c)(3) of that code, as part of or attached to the principal church building owned by the society or sect;

(3) the establishment and use of a columbarium by an organized religious society or sect that is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed under Section 501(c)(3) of that code, on land that:

(A) is owned by the society or sect; and

(B) is part of the campus on which an existing principal church building is located;

(4) the establishment and use of a columbarium on the campus of a private or independent institution of higher education, as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, that is wholly or substantially controlled, managed, owned, or supported by or otherwise affiliated with an organized religious society or sect that is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed under Section 501(c)(3) of that code, if a place of worship is located on the campus;

(5) the establishment and use of a mausoleum that is:

(A) constructed beneath the principal church building owned by an organized religious society or sect that:

(i) is exempt from income taxation under

Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed under Section 501(c)(3) of that code; and

(ii) has recognized religious traditions and practices of interring the remains of ordained clergy in or below the principal church building; and

(B) used only for the interment of the remains of ordained clergy of that organized religious society or sect;

(6) the establishment and operation, if authorized in accordance with Subsection (h), of a perpetual care cemetery by an organized religious society or sect that:

(A) is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed under Section 501(c)(3) of that code;

(B) has been in existence for at least five years;

(C) has at least \$500,000 in assets; and

(D) establishes and operates the cemetery on land that:

(i) is owned by the society or sect;

(ii) together with any other land owned by the society or sect and adjacent to the land on which the cemetery is located, is not less than 10 acres; and

(iii) is in a municipality with a population of at least one million that is located predominantly in a county that has a total area of less than 1,000 square miles;

(7) the establishment and use of a private family cemetery by an organization that is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed under Section 501(c)(3) of that code, on land that is:

(A) owned by the organization; and

(B) located in a county:

(i) with a population of more than 165,000; and

(ii) that is adjacent to a county that has a population of more than 1.5 million and in which more than 70 percent of the population lives in a single municipality; or

(8) the establishment and use of a private family

cemetery located at the site of a presidential library and museum.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to a private family cemetery that:

(1) was established and operating on or before September 1, 2009; or

(2) is established and operating on land outside the boundaries of a municipality that has been owned or occupied by members of the same family for at least three generations and that is within 10 miles of the largest prison cemetery in this state.

(d) Subsection (a) does not apply to a cemetery established and operating before September 1, 1995, in a county with a population of more than 315,000 and less than 351,000 that borders the Gulf of Mexico.

(e) For the purpose of determining where a cemetery may be located under Subsection (a), the boundary of an area annexed by a municipality is not considered to be a boundary of the municipality if:

(1) no more than 10 percent of the boundary of the annexed area is composed of a part of the boundary of the annexing municipality as it existed immediately before the annexation; or

(2) the annexed area cannot be developed as residential or commercial property and is primarily used for flood control.

(f) This subsection applies only to a municipality with a population of at least 60,000 that is located in a county with a population of no more than 155,000. Not later than December 1, 2001, a charitable nonprofit corporation may file a written application with the governing body of a municipality to establish or use a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality. The municipality by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare.

(g) Not later than December 1, 2003, a corporation may file

a written application with the governing body of a municipality that has a population of at least 27,000 and not more than 30,000 and that is located in a county with a population of at least 245,000 and not more than 250,000 to establish or use a cemetery located outside the municipality but within two miles of the municipal boundaries. The municipality by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of the cemetery if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare.

(g-1) Not later than September 1, 2020, a nonprofit organization may file a written application with the governing body of a municipality to establish or use a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality. The municipality by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare. This subsection applies only to a municipality that is wholly or partly located in a county with a population of more than 3.3 million.

(g-2) Not later than December 1, 2022, an individual, corporation, partnership, firm, trust, or association may file a written application with the governing body of a municipality to establish or use a cemetery located inside the legal boundaries of the municipality. The municipality by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of the cemetery if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare. This subsection applies only to a municipality that has a population of:

(1) at least 55,000 and not more than 60,000 and that is located in two counties, each of which has a population of less than 132,000; or

(2) at least 24,000 and not more than 26,000 and that is the county seat of a county that has a population of at least 130,000 and not more than 135,000.

(g-3) An individual, corporation, partnership, firm, trust, or association may file a written application with the governing body of a municipality to establish or use a cemetery located inside the limits of the municipality. The governing body by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of the cemetery if the governing body determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare. This subsection applies only to a municipality that is located in:

(1) a county with a population of more than 750,000; or

(2) a county adjacent to a county with a population of more than 750,000.

(g-4) An individual, corporation, partnership, firm, trust, or association may file a written application with the commissioners court of a county to establish or use a cemetery located inside the limits of the county. The commissioners court by order shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The commissioners court by order may authorize the establishment or use of the cemetery if the commissioners court determines and states in the order that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare. This subsection applies only to a county:

(1) with a population of more than 750,000; or

(2) that is adjacent to a county with a population of more than 750,000.

(h) The governing body of a municipality described by Subsection (b)(6)(D)(iii) may authorize the establishment and use in accordance with Subsection (b)(6) of a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare.

(i) A person may file a written application with the

governing body of a municipality to establish or use a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality. The municipality by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare. This subsection applies only to a municipality that:

- (1) is located in three or more counties;
- (2) has a population of 18,000 or more; and
- (3) does not have a cemetery within its boundaries, other than a family cemetery.

(j) Deleted by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

(k) This subsection applies only to a municipality with a population of 115,000 or more that is located in a county with a population of less than 132,000. Not later than September 1, 1994, a person may file a written application with the governing body of the municipality to establish or use a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality. The municipality by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included in the application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of a cemetery located inside the boundaries of the municipality if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use of the cemetery does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare.

(l) Subsection (a) does not apply to a cemetery established and operating before September 1, 2023, in a municipality:

- (1) with a population of not less than 75,000 and not more than 95,000; and
- (2) in which a state veterans cemetery is located.

(m) Not later than September 1, 2024, an organized religious society or sect may file a written application with the governing body of a municipality to establish or use a cemetery within the boundaries of the municipality. The municipality by ordinance shall prescribe the information to be included on the

application. The governing body by ordinance may authorize the establishment or use of the cemetery if the municipality determines and states in the ordinance that the establishment or use does not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare. This subsection applies only to a municipality with a population of 200,000 or more located in a county with a population of less than 300,000 that is adjacent to this state's international border with Mexico.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 215, 216, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 597, Sec. 77, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 736, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 200, Sec. 1, eff. May 21, 2001; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 631, Sec. 1, eff. June 13, 2001; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 669, Sec. 39, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 98, Sec. 1, eff. May 20, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 106 (S.B. [350](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1026 (H.B. [1614](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 263 (H.B. [1468](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 373 (H.B. [1404](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 487 (S.B. [662](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. [2927](#)), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 367 (S.B. [131](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 721 (H.B. [788](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1017 (H.B. [2643](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1163 (H.B. [2702](#)), Sec. 49,

eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 161 (S.B. [1093](#)), Sec. 10.007, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 287 (H.B. [1415](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 1, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 470 (H.B. [2214](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 9, 2017.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 292 (H.B. [2634](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1275 (H.B. [515](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 26 (H.B. [2005](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2021.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 464 (H.B. [1526](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2021.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 465 (H.B. [1571](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 579 (H.B. [2732](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 644 (H.B. [4559](#)), Sec. 100, eff. September 1, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 670 (H.B. [783](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 711.009. AUTHORITY OF CEMETERY KEEPER. (a) The superintendent, sexton, or other person in charge of a cemetery has the same powers, duties, and immunities granted by law to:

(1) a police officer in the municipality in which the cemetery is located; or

(2) a constable or sheriff of the county in which the cemetery is located if the cemetery is outside a municipality.

(b) A person who is granted authority under Subsection (a) shall maintain order and enforce the cemetery organization's rules, state law, and municipal ordinances in the cemetery over which that person has charge and as near the cemetery as necessary to protect cemetery property.

(c) This section applies only to a cemetery located in a

municipality with a population of 40,000 or more or in a county with a population of 290,000 or more.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 345 (S.B. [1173](#)), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 161 (S.B. [1093](#)), Sec. 10.008, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.010. ABANDONED, UNKNOWN, OR UNVERIFIED CEMETERY.

(a) The owner of property on which an unknown cemetery is discovered or on which an abandoned cemetery is located may not construct improvements on the property in a manner that would disturb the cemetery until the human remains interred in the cemetery are removed under a written order issued by the state registrar or the state registrar's designee under Section [711.004](#)(f) and under an order of a district court as provided by this section, except as provided by Section [711.004](#)(f-1).

(b) On petition of the owner of the property, a district court of the county in which an unknown cemetery is discovered or an abandoned cemetery is located may order the removal of any dedication for cemetery purposes that affects the property if the court finds that the removal of the dedication is in the public interest. If a court orders the removal of a dedication of a cemetery and all human remains in that cemetery have not previously been removed, the court shall order the removal of the human remains from the cemetery to:

- (1) a perpetual care cemetery;
- (2) a municipal or county cemetery; or
- (3) any other place on the owner's property that the

district court finds is in the public interest.

(c) In addition to any notice required by Section [711.004](#), notice of a petition filed under Subsection (b) must be given to the Texas Historical Commission and to the county historical commission of the county in which the cemetery is located. The court may consult the Texas Historical Commission and the county historical

commission in making a decision under this section. The court may also designate or appoint any person, party, court appointed representative, or official the court considers necessary to assist in determining whether the removal is in the public interest.

(d) The Texas Historical Commission, with consent of the landowner, may investigate a suspected but unverified cemetery or may delegate the investigation to a qualified person described by Section 711.0105(a).

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 703, Sec. 1, eff. June 18, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 251 (H.B. 1011), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. 2927), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. 1630), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. 1630), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 817 (H.B. 2430), Sec. 2, eff. June 10, 2019.

Sec. 711.0105. METHOD OF REMOVAL OF REMAINS. (a) The removal of remains authorized under this chapter shall be supervised by a cemetery keeper, a licensed funeral director, a medical examiner, a coroner, or a professional archeologist.

(b) The person removing the remains shall make a good faith effort to locate and remove all human remains, any casket or other covering of the remains, and any funerary objects associated with the remains.

(c) Remains that have been moved must be reburied unless a court, medical examiner, coroner, other authorized official, or next of kin approves a different disposition of the remains.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. 2927), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 711.011. FILING RECORD OF UNKNOWN OR ABANDONED CEMETERY. (a) A person who discovers an unknown or abandoned

cemetery shall file notice of the discovery of the cemetery with the county clerk of the county in which the cemetery is located and concurrently mail notice to the landowner on record in the county appraisal district not later than the 10th day after the date of the discovery. The notice must contain a legal description of the land on which the unknown or abandoned cemetery was found and describe the approximate location of the cemetery and the evidence of the cemetery that was discovered.

(b) A county clerk may not charge a fee for filing notice under this section.

(c) The county clerk shall send a copy of the notice to the Texas Historical Commission and file the notice in the deed records of the county, with an index entry referencing the land on which the cemetery was discovered.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 703, Sec. 1, eff. June 18, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. [2927](#)), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. [1630](#)), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. [1630](#)), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 711.0111. NOTICE OF UNVERIFIED CEMETERY. (a) A person who discovers an unverified cemetery shall file notice and evidence of the discovery with the Texas Historical Commission on a form provided by the Texas Historical Commission, and shall concurrently provide a copy of the notice to the landowner on record in the county appraisal district on whose land the unverified cemetery is located.

(b) The landowner described by Subsection (a) may send a response or comments to the Texas Historical Commission concerning the notice not later than the 30th day after the date the notice is filed.

(c) The Texas Historical Commission shall evaluate the notice of the unverified cemetery, the evidence submitted with the notice, and the response of the landowner, if any, and shall

determine whether there is sufficient evidence of the existence of a cemetery.

(d) If the Texas Historical Commission determines sufficient evidence supports the existence of a cemetery, the Texas Historical Commission shall inform the landowner and may file notice of the existence of the cemetery under Section [711.011](#).

(e) If the Texas Historical Commission determines sufficient evidence supports a determination that a cemetery does not exist, the Texas Historical Commission shall notify the landowner on record in the appraisal district of its determination, amend the notice to include the commission's determination, and ensure any notice filed with a county clerk under Section [711.011](#) is corrected.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. [1630](#)), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 711.012. RULES. (a) The Finance Commission of Texas may adopt rules to enforce and administer Sections [711.003](#), [711.004](#), [711.007](#), [711.008](#), [711.0105](#), 711.021-711.024, 711.032-711.036, [711.038](#), [711.0381](#), 711.040-711.042, [711.052](#), [711.061](#), [711.063](#), and [711.064](#) relating to perpetual care cemeteries.

(b) The Texas Funeral Service Commission may adopt rules, establish procedures, and prescribe forms to enforce and administer Section [711.0105](#).

(c) The Texas Historical Commission may adopt rules to:

(1) enforce and administer Sections [711.010](#) and [711.011](#); and

(2) enforce and administer Sections [711.004](#), [711.007](#), [711.0105](#), [711.035](#), and [711.036](#) relating to cemeteries that are not perpetual care cemeteries.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 562, Sec. 34, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 263 (H.B. [1468](#)), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. [2927](#)), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 123 (S.B. 661), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. 614), Sec. 39, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 124 (H.B. 1540), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2019.

#### SUBCHAPTER B. CEMETERY CORPORATIONS

Sec. 711.021. FORMATION OF CORPORATION TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE CEMETERY. (a) An individual, corporation, partnership, firm, trust, or association may not engage in a business for cemetery purposes in this state unless the person is a corporation organized for those purposes.

(b) A corporation conducting a business for cemetery purposes, including the sale of plots, may be formed only as provided by this section. The corporation must be a filing entity or foreign filing entity, as those terms are defined by Section 1.002, Business Organizations Code.

(b-1) The formation and governance of a nonprofit corporation for cemetery purposes is subject to Sections 711.022 and 711.023.

(c) The charter of a cemetery corporation formed after May 15, 1947, but before September 1, 1993, must state whether the corporation:

- (1) is operated for profit or not for profit; and
- (2) is operating a perpetual care cemetery or a nonperpetual care cemetery.

(d) A corporation formed before September 3, 1945, under statutory authority other than Section 5, Chapter 340, Acts of the 49th Legislature, Regular Session, 1945 (Article 912a-5, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes), to maintain and operate a cemetery is governed by this chapter only to the extent that this chapter does not conflict with the charter or articles of incorporation of the corporation.

(e) This section does not apply to a corporation chartered by the state before September 3, 1945, that, under its charter, bylaws, or dedication, created a perpetual care trust fund and maintains that fund in accordance with the corporation's trust agreement, Chapter 712, and this chapter. The corporation may operate a perpetual care cemetery without amending the corporation's charter as if it had been incorporated under this section.

(f) Any cemetery that begins its initial operations on or after September 1, 1993, shall be operated as a perpetual care cemetery in accordance with Chapter 712.

(g) This section does not apply to:

(1) a family, fraternal, or community cemetery that is not larger than 10 acres;

(2) an unincorporated association of plot owners not operated for profit;

(3) a church, a religious society or denomination, or an entity solely administering the temporalities of a church or religious society or denomination; or

(4) a public cemetery belonging to this state or a county or municipality.

(h) A cemetery corporation, including a corporation described by Subsection (d), that does not operate as a perpetual care cemetery in accordance with Chapter 712 may not use the words "perpetual care" or "endowment care," or any other term that suggests "perpetual care" or "endowment care" standards, in:

(1) the cemetery's name; or

(2) any advertising relating to the cemetery.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 405, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 123 (S.B. 661), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.022. FORMATION OF NONPROFIT CEMETERY CORPORATION BY PLOT OWNERS. (a) Plot owners may organize a nonprofit

corporation to receive title to land previously dedicated to cemetery purposes.

(b) The plot owners must:

(1) publish notice of the time and place of the organizational meeting in a newspaper in the county, if there is a newspaper, for 30 days before the date of the meeting; and

(2) post written notice at the cemetery of the time and place of the meeting for 30 days before the date of the meeting.

(c) A majority of the plot owners present and voting at the meeting shall decide whether to incorporate and to convey the land to the corporation.

(d) If the plot owners vote to incorporate, at the same meeting they shall select from the plot owners a board of directors to be named in the charter.

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

Sec. 711.023. RIGHTS OF PLOT OWNERS IN CEMETERY OPERATED BY NONPROFIT CEMETERY CORPORATION. (a) A person who purchases a plot from a nonprofit cemetery corporation is a shareholder of the corporation. The person may vote in the election of corporate officers and on other matters to the same extent as a stockholder in another corporation.

(b) An owner of a plot in a cemetery operated by a nonprofit corporation is a shareholder in any corporation that owns the cemetery. The plot owner may exercise the rights and privileges of a shareholder, whether the owner acquired title to the plot from the corporation or before the corporation was organized.

(c) This section does not apply to a nonprofit cemetery corporation formed before September 1, 1963, if:

(1) the corporation was formed under Subdivision 87, Article 1302, Revised Statutes; and

(2) the charter or the articles of incorporation of the corporation provide that the corporation has no capital stock.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1284, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 711.024. AUTHORITY OF NONPROFIT CEMETERY CORPORATION.

A nonprofit cemetery corporation organized by plot owners may divide cemetery property into lots and subdivisions for cemetery purposes and charge assessments on the property for the purposes of general improvement and maintenance.

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

#### SUBCHAPTER C. CEMETERY ORGANIZATIONS

Sec. 711.031. RULES; CIVIL PENALTY. (a) A cemetery organization may adopt and enforce rules:

(1) concerning the use, care, control, management, restriction, and protection of the cemetery operated by the cemetery organization;

(2) to restrict the use of cemetery property;

(3) to regulate the placement, uniformity, class, and kind of markers, monuments, effigies, and other structures in any part of the cemetery;

(4) to regulate the planting and care of plants in the cemetery;

(5) to prevent the interment of remains not entitled to be interred in the cemetery;

(6) to prevent the use of a plot for a purpose that violates the cemetery organization's restrictions;

(7) to regulate the conduct of persons on cemetery property and to prevent improper meetings at the cemetery; and

(8) for other purposes the directors consider necessary for the proper conduct of the cemetery organization's business, and for the protection of the premises and the principles, plans, and ideals on which the cemetery was organized.

(b) Rules adopted under this section must be plainly printed or typed and maintained for inspection in the cemetery organization's office or another place in the cemetery prescribed by the directors.

(c) The directors may prescribe a penalty for the violation of a rule adopted under this section. The cemetery organization may recover the amount of the penalty in a civil action.

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

by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 711.032. DISCRIMINATION BY RACE, COLOR, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN PROHIBITED. (a) A cemetery organization may not adopt or enforce a rule that prohibits interment because of the race, color, or national origin of a decedent.

(b) A provision of a contract entered into by a cemetery organization or of a certificate of ownership or other instrument of conveyance issued by a cemetery organization that prohibits interment in a cemetery because of the race, color, or national origin of a decedent is void.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 13, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 711.033. PROPERTY ACQUISITION BY CEMETERY ORGANIZATION; RECORDING TITLE. (a) A cemetery organization may acquire by purchase, donation, or devise property consisting of land, a mausoleum, a crematory and columbarium, or other property in which remains may be interred under law.

(b) A cemetery organization operating a cemetery located and operated in accordance with the distance requirements prescribed in Section 711.008 may acquire land adjacent to the cemetery for cemetery purposes. In this subsection, "adjacent" means that some part of the property to be acquired has a common boundary with the existing cemetery, or a common boundary with a public easement, a utility easement, or a railroad right-of-way, some part of which has a common boundary with the cemetery. In no event shall the closest points of the property to be acquired and the cemetery be more than 200 feet apart.

(c) A cemetery organization that acquires property may record title to its property with the county clerk of the county in which the property is located if its president and secretary or other authorized officer acknowledge a declaration executed by the cemetery organization that describes the property and declares the cemetery organization's intention to use the property or a part of the property for interment purposes.

(d) Filing under Subsection (b) is constructive notice as of

the date of the filing of the use of the property for interment.

(e) A cemetery organization may by condemnation acquire property in which remains may be interred, and the acquisition of that property is for a public purpose.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 14, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 200, Sec. 2, eff. May 21, 2001.

Sec. 711.034. DEDICATION. (a) A cemetery organization that acquires property for interment purposes shall:

(1) in the case of land, survey and subdivide the property into gardens or sections, with descriptive names or numbers, and make a map or plat of the property showing the plots contained within the perimeter boundary and showing a specific unique number for each plot; or

(2) in the case of a mausoleum or a crematory and columbarium, make a map or plat of the property delineating sections or other divisions with descriptive names and numbers and showing a specific unique number for each crypt, lawn crypt, or niche.

(b) The cemetery organization shall file the map or plat with the county clerk of each county in which the property or any part of the property is located.

(c) The cemetery organization shall file with the map or plat a written certificate or declaration of dedication of the property delineated by the map or plat, dedicating the property exclusively to cemetery purposes. The certificate or declaration must be:

(1) in a form prescribed by the directors or officers of the cemetery organization;

(2) signed by the president or vice-president and the secretary of the cemetery organization, or by another person authorized by the directors; and

(3) acknowledged.

(d) Filing a map or plat and a certificate or declaration under this section dedicates the property for cemetery purposes and is constructive notice of that dedication.

(e) The certificate or declaration may contain a provision permitting the directors by order to resurvey and change the shape and size of the property for which the associated map or plat is filed if that change does not disturb any interred remains. Except as provided by Subsection (e-1), if a change is made, the cemetery organization shall:

(1) file an amended map or plat not later than the last day of the next calendar quarter; and

(2) indicate any change in a specific unique number assigned to a plot, crypt, lawn crypt, or columbarium niche.

(e-1) A cemetery organization that holds a certificate of authority to operate a perpetual care cemetery under Chapter 712 is not required to file an amended map or plat if:

(1) the only change to the property is:

(A) the placement of a cremains receptacle that contains not more than four niches on a plot; or

(B) the alteration of an existing cremains receptacle on a plot; and

(2) the cemetery organization maintains records, as required by rules adopted by the Finance Commission of Texas, that specify the location of the cremains receptacle.

(f) The county clerk shall number and file the map or plat and record the certificate or declaration in the county deed records.

(g) A cemetery association is civilly liable to the state in an amount not to exceed \$1,000 for each map or plat that fails to comply with Subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e).

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 15, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 502, Sec. 1, eff. Oct. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 123 (S.B. 661), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.035. EFFECT OF DEDICATION. (a) Property may be dedicated for cemetery purposes, and the dedication is permitted in respect for the dead, for the disposition of remains, and in

fulfillment of a duty to and for the benefit of the public.

(b) Dedication of cemetery property and title to the exclusive right of sepulture of a plot owner are not affected by the dissolution of the cemetery organization, nonuse by the cemetery organization, alienation, encumbrance, or forced sale of the property.

(c) Dedication of cemetery property may not be invalidated because of a violation of the law against perpetuities or the law against the suspension of the power of alienation of title to or use of property.

(d) A railroad, street, road, alley, pipeline, telephone, telegraph, electric line, wind turbine, cellular telephone tower, or other public utility or thoroughfare may not be placed through, over, or across a part of a dedicated cemetery without the consent of:

(1) the directors of the cemetery organization that owns or operates the cemetery; or

(2) at least two-thirds of the owners of plots in the cemetery.

(e) All property of a dedicated cemetery, including a road, alley, or walk in the cemetery:

(1) is exempt from public improvements assessments, fees, and public taxation; and

(2) may not be sold on execution or applied in payment of debts due from individual owners and plots.

(f) Dedicated cemetery property shall be used exclusively for cemetery purposes until the dedication is removed by court order or until the maintenance of the cemetery is enjoined or abated as a nuisance under Section [711.007](#).

(g) Property is considered to be dedicated cemetery property if:

(1) one or more human burials are present on the property; or

(2) a dedication of the property for cemetery use is recorded in the deed records of the county where the land is located.

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

by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 16, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. 2927), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 711.036. REMOVAL OF DEDICATION. (a) A cemetery organization may petition a district court of the county in which its dedicated cemetery is located to remove the dedication with respect to all or any portion of the cemetery if:

(1) all the remains have been removed from that portion of the cemetery where the dedication is to be removed; or

(2) no interments were made in that portion of the cemetery where the dedication is to be removed and that portion of the cemetery is not used or necessary for interment purposes.

(b) An owner of land adjacent to a cemetery for which a cemetery organization or other governing body does not exist may petition a district court of the county in which the cemetery is located to remove any human remains and the dedication for all or any portion of the cemetery. In addition to the notice required by Section 711.004, notice of a petition filed under this subsection must be given to the Texas Historical Commission and to the county historical commission of the county in which the cemetery is located. The court may consult the Texas Historical Commission and the county historical commission in making a decision under this section. The court may also designate or appoint any person, party, court appointed representative, or official the court considers necessary to assist in determining whether the removal is in the public interest. Unknown next of kin of deceased persons buried in the cemetery shall be served by publication of a notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the cemetery is located, or if there is not a newspaper of general circulation in the county, in a newspaper of general circulation in an adjacent county. A reasonable good faith effort shall be made to remove all remains and monuments from the cemetery or that portion of the cemetery for which the dedication is to be removed.

(c) The court shall order the removal of the human remains and the dedication on notice and proof satisfactory to the court

that the removal is in the public interest.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. [2927](#)), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 817 (H.B. [2430](#)), Sec. 3, eff. June 10, 2019.

Sec. 711.037. LIEN AGAINST CEMETERY PROPERTY. (a) A cemetery organization by contract may incur indebtedness as required to conduct its business and may secure the indebtedness by mortgage, deed of trust, or other lien against its property.

(b) A mortgage, deed of trust, or other lien placed on dedicated cemetery property, or on cemetery property that is later dedicated with the consent of the holder of the lien, does not affect the dedication and is subject to the dedication. A sale on foreclosure of the lien is subject to the dedication of the property for cemetery purposes.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 18, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 711.038. SALE OF PLOTS BY CEMETERY ORGANIZATIONS. (a) A cemetery organization may sell and convey the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot:

(1) after a map or plat and a certificate or declaration of dedication are filed as provided by Section [711.034](#);

(2) subject to the rules of the cemetery organization and the restrictions in the certificate of ownership or other instrument of conveyance; and

(3) after payment in full of the purchase price of the plot.

(b) A certificate of ownership or other instrument evidencing the conveyance of the exclusive right of sepulture by a cemetery organization must be signed by the president or vice-president and the secretary or other officers authorized by the cemetery organization.

(c) A conveyance of the exclusive right of sepulture must be filed and recorded in the cemetery organization's office.

(d) A plot or a part of a plot that is conveyed as a separate plot by a certificate of ownership or other instrument may not be divided without the consent of the cemetery organization.

(e) A person is not required to be licensed or registered to sell a plot in a dedicated cemetery.

(f) A cemetery organization may not resell the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot unless the exclusive right of sepulture has been reacquired by the cemetery organization. A sanction or other penalty may not be imposed on a cemetery organization that violates this subsection unless:

(1) the state agency authorized to enforce this section provides the cemetery organization written notice of the violation; and

(2) the cemetery organization does not correct the violation before the 91st day after the date on which the cemetery organization received the notice.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 19, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 263 (H.B. [1468](#)), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. [52](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. [52](#)), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. [614](#)), Sec. 40, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.0381. SALE OR RESALE OF PLOTS BY CERTAIN PERSONS.

(a) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. [614](#)), Sec. 47(7), eff. September 1, 2019.

(b) Resale of the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot is subject to the rules of the cemetery organization and any restrictions in the certificate of ownership, quitclaim agreement, or other instrument of conveyance. A quitclaim agreement or other

instrument evidencing the conveyance of the exclusive right of sepulture must be:

(1) in a form authorized by or otherwise acceptable to the cemetery organization, subject to Subsection (c);

(2) signed by:

(A) the grantee named in the certificate of ownership or other instrument of conveyance as filed and recorded in the cemetery organization's office in accordance with Section 711.038 or 711.039(g)(2), as the seller or transferor;

(B) the designated purchaser or transferee; and

(C) each cemetery broker or other agent assisting in the transfer of the interment rights; and

(3) filed and recorded with the cemetery organization not later than the third business day after the date of the sale.

(c) On request of a person acting as a cemetery broker, a cemetery organization shall provide its rules, conveyance forms, and written guidelines and procedures for brokered sales, if any.

(d) The resale of the exclusive right of sepulture in a group of interment rights that were conveyed collectively may not be divided without the consent of the cemetery organization.

(e) A person acting as a cemetery broker that sells or resells the right of sepulture in a plot shall collect and remit to the cemetery organization:

(1) all fees required by law; and

(2) any other fee required by the rules of the cemetery organization, subject to Subsection (f).

(f) A fee required by a rule of the cemetery organization for the sale or resale of the right of sepulture in a plot under this section may not exceed the fee charged by the cemetery organization on the sale of the right of sepulture in a plot under Section 711.038.

(g) A person acting as a cemetery broker must keep a record of each sale or resale under this section. The record must include:

(1) the name and address of the purchaser;

(2) the date of the purchase;

(3) a copy of the purchase agreement, with the name and address of the cemetery;

- (4) a specific description of the interment rights;
- (5) the purchase price;
- (6) the amount of fees collected and remitted in accordance with Subsection (e); and
- (7) information on the disposal of the purchase agreement, including whether the agreement was conveyed, canceled, or voided.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 5, eff. January 1, 2014.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. 614), Sec. 47(7), eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.039. RIGHTS OF INTERMENT IN PLOT. (a) A plot in which the exclusive right of sepulture is conveyed is presumed to be the separate property of the person named as grantee in the certificate of ownership or other instrument of conveyance.

(b) The spouse of a person to whom the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot is conveyed has a vested right of interment of the spouse's remains in the plot while the spouse is married to the plot owner or if the spouse is married to the plot owner at the time of the owner's death.

(c) An attempted conveyance or other action without the joinder or written, attached consent of the spouse of the plot owner does not divest the spouse of the vested right of interment.

(d) The vested right of interment is terminated:

(1) on the final decree of divorce between the plot owner and the owner's former spouse unless the decree provides otherwise; or

(2) when the remains of the person having the vested right are interred elsewhere.

(e) Unless a plot owner who has the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot and who is interred in that plot has made a specific disposition of the plot by express reference to the plot in the owner's will or by written declaration filed and recorded in the office of the cemetery organization:

(1) a grave, niche, or crypt in the plot shall be

reserved for the surviving spouse of the plot owner; and

(2) the owner's children, in order of need, may be interred in any remaining graves, niches, or crypts of the plot without the consent of a person claiming an interest in the plot.

(f) The surviving spouse or a child of an interred plot owner may each waive his right of interment in the plot in favor of a relative of the owner or relative of the owner's spouse. The person in whose favor the waiver is made may be interred in the plot.

(g) The exclusive right of sepulture in an unused grave, niche, or crypt of a plot in which the plot owner has been interred may be conveyed only by:

(1) specific disposition of the unused grave, niche, or crypt by express reference to it in a will or by written declaration of the plot owner filed and recorded in the office of the cemetery organization; or

(2) the surviving spouse, if any, and the heirs-at-law of the owner.

(h) Unless a deceased plot owner who has the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot and who is not interred in the plot has otherwise made specific disposition of the plot, the exclusive right of sepulture in the plot, except the one grave, niche, or crypt reserved for the surviving spouse, if any, vests on the death of the owner in the owner's heirs-at-law and may be conveyed by them.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 20, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 502, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 711.0395. MULTIPLE INTERMENTS IN SAME PLOT. A cemetery organization may not make more than one interment in a plot unless each owner of the plot consents to the interment.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 263 (H.B. 1468), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 711.040. MULTIPLE OWNERS OF PLOT. Two or more owners of a plot may designate a person to represent the plot and file with the cemetery organization written notice of the designation. If

notice is not filed, the cemetery organization may inter or permit an interment in the plot at the request or direction of a registered co-owner of the plot.

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 678, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 21, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 711.041. ACCESS TO CEMETERY. (a) Any person who wishes to visit a cemetery or private burial grounds for which no public ingress or egress is available shall have the right to reasonable ingress and egress for the purpose of visiting the cemetery or private burial grounds. This right of access extends only to visitation during the hours determined by the owner or owners of the lands under Subsection (b) or at a reasonable time as provided by Subsection (c) and only for purposes usually associated with cemetery visits.

(b) The owner or owners of the lands surrounding the cemetery or private burial grounds may designate the routes of reasonable ingress and egress and reasonable hours of availability.

(c) At a time other than the time provided by Subsection (b), the owner or owners of the lands surrounding a cemetery or private burial grounds must allow a person to enter and exit the owner's land for the purpose of visiting the cemetery or private burial grounds if:

(1) the person provides written notice to the owner or owners of the lands surrounding the cemetery or private burial grounds of the person's visit;

(2) the person provides the notice required by Subdivision (1) not later than the 14th day before the date the person wishes to visit the cemetery; and

(3) the time of the visit is reasonable.

(d) This section does not apply to an unverified cemetery. Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 22, eff. Sept. 1, 1993. Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 263 (H.B. [1468](#)), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2009.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 110 (S.B. [1630](#)), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 711.042. AUTHORITY OF NONPROFIT CEMETERY ORGANIZATION. A nonprofit cemetery organization organized by plot owners may:

(1) divide cemetery property into lots and subdivisions for cemetery purposes;

(2) charge assessments on the property for the purposes of general improvement and maintenance; and

(3) take any action, to the same extent and for the same purposes as a for-profit cemetery corporation, that is necessary to carry out the organization's business purposes, which include the business purposes necessarily incident to the burial and disposal of human remains, including any action necessary to:

(A) convey property or other assets of the organization;

(B) borrow money;

(C) pledge or mortgage the property or other assets of the organization to secure the organization's indebtedness or other obligations;

(D) lend money and take security for the loan in furtherance of its business purposes; and

(E) conduct any business activity or business directly or by or through one or more subsidiaries.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 703, Sec. 2, eff. June 18, 1999.

#### SUBCHAPTER D. ENFORCEMENT

Sec. 711.051. ENFORCEMENT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL; PROCEEDINGS TO FORFEIT CHARTER FOR NONCOMPLIANCE. (a) A cemetery corporation that violates this chapter or Chapter 712 forfeits the corporation's charter and right to do business in this state unless the corporation corrects the violation before the 30th day after the date of receiving notice of the violation from the attorney general.

(b) When the attorney general learns that a cemetery corporation has violated this chapter or Chapter 712, the attorney general shall serve notice of the violation on the corporation.

(c) If the violation is not corrected before the 30th day after the date of the notice, the attorney general shall bring suit or quo warranto proceedings for the forfeiture of the corporation's charter and dissolution of the corporation in a district court of Travis County or of any county in which the violation occurred.

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

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 123 (S.B. 661), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.0515. ENFORCEMENT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL; INJUNCTIVE RELIEF. In addition to bringing an action under Section 711.051, the attorney general may bring an action for injunctive relief to enforce this chapter or a rule or order adopted by the Texas Funeral Service Commission under this chapter.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 263 (H.B. 1468), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2009.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 914 (H.B. 2927), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2009.

Reenacted by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 91 (S.B. 1303), Sec. 12.008, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 124 (H.B. 1540), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.052. CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

(a) A person who is an individual, firm, association, corporation, or municipality, or an officer, agent, or employee of an individual, firm, association, corporation, or municipality, commits an offense if the person:

(1) engages in a business for cemetery purposes in this state other than through a corporation organized for that purpose, if a corporation is required by law;

(2) fails or refuses to keep records of interment as required by Sections 711.003 and 711.004;

(3) sells, offers to sell, or advertises for sale a plot or the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot for purposes of

speculation or investment;

(4) represents through advertising or printed material that a retail department will be established for the resale of the plots of plot purchasers, that specific improvements will be made in the cemetery, or that specific merchandise or services will be furnished to a plot owner, unless adequate funds or reserves are created by the cemetery organization for the represented purpose;

(5) makes more than one interment in a plot in a cemetery operated by a cemetery organization other than as provided by Section 711.0395;

(6) removes remains from a plot in a cemetery operated by a cemetery organization without complying with Section 711.004;

(7) offers or receives monetary inducement to solicit business for a cemetery broker; or

(8) fails or refuses to keep records of sales or resales or to collect and remit fees as required by Section 711.0381.

(b) A cemetery organization or an officer, agent, or employee of the cemetery organization commits an offense if the cemetery organization, officer, agent, or employee offers any inducement, pecuniary or otherwise, to any person or entity for the purpose of securing or attempting to secure business for that cemetery organization. This subsection does not prohibit the offering or payment by a cemetery organization of any such inducement, pecuniary or otherwise, to an officer, employee, agent, subcontractor, or representative of the cemetery organization.

(c) A cemetery organization or an officer, agent, or employee of the cemetery organization commits an offense if the cemetery organization, officer, agent, or employee of a cemetery organization offers a free plot in a drawing, in a lottery, or in another manner, unless the offer is for the immediate burial of an indigent person.

(d) Except as provided by this subsection, an offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. An offense under Subsection (a)(5) or (6) is a felony of the second degree.

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

by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 14, Sec. 217, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 634, Sec. 23, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 123 (S.B. 661), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1236 (S.B. 1296), Sec. 10.001, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. 614), Sec. 41, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.0521. ACCESS TO CEMETERIES; CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

(a) A person who is an individual, firm, association, corporation, or municipality, or an officer, agent, or employee of an individual, firm, association, corporation, or municipality, commits an offense if the person interferes with a person's reasonable right to ingress and egress under Section 711.041.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor. Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 263 (H.B. 1468), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 711.053. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "commissioner" means the banking commissioner of Texas.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 562, Sec. 35, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 711.054. ENFORCEMENT BY FINANCE COMMISSION OF TEXAS.

The Finance Commission of Texas may use remedies available under Chapter 712 to enforce a section listed under Section 711.012(a) relating to perpetual care cemeteries.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 562, Sec. 35, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 711.055. ENFORCEMENT BY COMMISSIONER. (a) Chapter 2001, Government Code, applies to a proceeding under this section.

(b) After notice and opportunity for hearing, the commissioner may impose an administrative penalty on a person who:

(1) violates this chapter or a final order of the

commissioner or rule of the Finance Commission of Texas and does not correct the violation before the 31st day after the date the person receives written notice of the violation from the Texas Department of Banking; or

(2) engages in a pattern of violations, as determined by the commissioner.

(c) The amount of the penalty for each violation may not exceed \$1,000 for each day the violation occurs.

(d) In determining the amount of the penalty, the commissioner shall consider the seriousness of the violation, the person's history of violations, and the person's good faith in attempting to comply with this chapter. The commissioner may collect the penalty in the same manner that a money judgment is enforced in district court.

(e) In addition to any penalty that may be imposed under Subsection (b), the commissioner may bring a civil action against a person to enjoin a violation described in Subsection (b) that has not been corrected within 30 days after receipt by the person of written notice of the violation from the commissioner. The civil action may be brought in the district court of the county in which the cemetery is operated.

(f) The commissioner may issue an order to cease and desist if a violation described in Subsection (b) has not been corrected within 30 days after receipt by the person of written notice of the violation from the commissioner. Any order proposed under this subsection shall be served on the person, shall state the grounds for the proposed order with reasonable certainty, and shall state the proposed effective date, which may not be less than 15 days after receipt by the person. Unless the person requests a hearing within 15 days after the receipt, the order is effective as proposed.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 562, Sec. 35, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 711.056. PATTERN OF WILFUL DISREGARD.

(a) If after a hearing conducted as provided by Chapter 2001, Government Code, the trier of fact finds that a violation of this chapter or a rule of the Finance Commission of Texas

establishes a pattern of wilful disregard for the requirements of this chapter or rules of the finance commission, the trier of fact may recommend to the commissioner that the maximum administrative penalty permitted under Section 711.055 be imposed on the person committing the violation or that the commissioner cancel or not renew the person's permit under Chapter 154, Finance Code, if the person holds such a permit.

(b) For the purposes of this section, violations corrected as provided by Section 711.055 may be included in determining whether a pattern of wilful disregard for the requirements of this chapter or rules of the finance commission exists.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 562, Sec. 35, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 71 (S.B. 1402), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. 614), Sec. 42, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.057. EMERGENCY ORDER. (a) The commissioner may issue an emergency order that takes effect immediately if the commissioner finds that immediate and irreparable harm is threatened to the public or a beneficiary under a sale of the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot.

(b) An emergency order remains in effect unless stayed by the commissioner.

(c) The person named in the order may request in writing an opportunity for a hearing to show that the emergency order should be stayed. On receipt of the request, the commissioner shall set a time for the hearing before the 22nd day after the date the commissioner received the request, unless extended at the request of the person named in the order.

(d) The hearing is an administrative hearing relating to the validity of findings that support immediate effect of the order.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.058. RESTITUTION. The commissioner may issue an order to a person requiring restitution if, after notice and opportunity for hearing, the commissioner finds that the person:

(1) failed to remit a fee in accordance with Section [711.0381](#); or

(2) misappropriated, converted, or illegally withheld or failed or refused to pay on demand money entrusted to the person that belongs to a cemetery organization under an instrument of conveyance.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. [52](#)), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.059. SEIZURE OF ACCOUNTS AND RECORDS.

(a) The commissioner may issue an order to seize accounts in which funds from the sale or resale of the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot, including earnings, may be held and may issue an order to seize the records that relate to the sale or resale of the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot if the commissioner finds, by examination or other credible evidence, that the person:

(1) failed to remit a fee in accordance with Section [711.0381](#);

(2) misappropriated, converted, or illegally withheld or failed or refused to pay on demand money entrusted to the person that belongs to a cemetery organization under an instrument of conveyance; or

(3) refused to submit to examination by the department.

(b) An order shall be served on the person named in the order by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the person.

(c) An order takes effect immediately and remains in effect unless stayed by the commissioner, if the commissioner finds that immediate and irreparable harm is threatened to the public or a beneficiary under a sale of the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot. If such a threat does not exist, the order must state the effective date, which may not be before the 16th day after the date

the order is mailed.

(d) An emergency order remains in effect unless stayed by the commissioner. The person named in the order may request in writing an opportunity for a hearing to show that the emergency order should be stayed. On receipt of the request, the commissioner shall set a time before the 22nd day after the date the commissioner received the request, unless extended at the request of the person named in the order. The hearing is an administrative hearing relating to the findings that support immediate effect of the order.

(e) A nonemergency order takes effect as proposed unless the person named in the order requests a hearing not later than the 15th day after the date the order is mailed.

(f) After the issuance of an order under this section, the commissioner may initiate an administrative claim for ancillary relief, including a claim for:

(1) costs incurred in the administration, transfer, or other disposition of the seized assets and records; or

(2) costs reasonably expected to be incurred in connection with the administration and performance of any outstanding certificate of ownership or other instrument of conveyance that is a part of a sale by the person subject to the order.

(g) The remedy provided by Subsection (f) is not exclusive. The commissioner may seek an additional remedy authorized under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. 614), Sec. 43, eff. September 1, 2019.

#### SUBCHAPTER E. LAWN CRYPTS

Sec. 711.061. REQUIREMENTS FOR LAWN CRYPTS. (a) A lawn crypt may not be installed unless:

(1) the lawn crypt is constructed of concrete and

reinforced steel or other comparably durable material;

(2) the lawn crypt is installed on not less than six inches of rock, gravel, or other drainage material;

(3) the lawn crypt provides a method to drain water out of the lawn crypt;

(4) the outside top surface of the lawn crypt at the time of installation is at least 1-1/2 feet below the surface of the ground as required by Section [714.001\(a\)\(2\)](#) and is capable of withstanding the weight of the soil and sod above the top surface and the weight of machinery and equipment normally used in the maintenance of the cemetery;

(5) the lawn crypt is installed in a garden or other section of the cemetery that has been dedicated for lawn crypt interment purposes in accordance with Section [711.034](#); and

(6) the lawn crypt is installed in multiple units of 10 or more or as prescribed by Subsection (b).

(b) A lawn crypt that is part of a private estate may be installed in fewer than 10 units. For purposes of this subsection, a private estate is a small section of a cemetery that has the following characteristics:

(1) is sold under a single contract;

(2) is usually offset from other burial sites;

(3) allows for interment of several members of the same family or their designees; and

(4) is identified on the plat for cemetery property as a private estate in accordance with Section [711.034](#).

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1389, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 532 (H.B. [2495](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1336 (S.B. [1167](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 711.063. CONSTRUCTION; DEFAULT. (a) A cemetery in which undeveloped lawn crypt spaces are being sold or reserved for sale shall begin construction on the lawn crypt section not later than 48 months after the date of the first sale or reservation,

whichever is earlier, and must complete construction not later than 60 months after the date of the first sale or reservation, whichever is earlier.

(b) If construction of a lawn crypt section described by Subsection (a) does not begin or has not been completed by the dates specified in Subsection (a), on the buyer's written request, the cemetery shall refund the entire amount paid for the undeveloped lawn crypt space not later than the 30th day after the date of the buyer's request.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 532 (H.B. 2495), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2011.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1336 (S.B. 1167), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 711.064. CONTRACT DISCLOSURES. (a) A sales contract for an undeveloped lawn crypt space must contain terms, whether in English or Spanish, that inform the buyer:

(1) that the buyer may, after providing written notice, cancel the contract for failure by the cemetery or contractor to construct the lawn crypt space within the time limits specified by Section 711.063(a) and receive a refund of the entire amount paid under the contract for the undeveloped lawn crypt space as described by Section 711.063(b); and

(2) of the options available under a fully paid contract if the person to be interred in the undeveloped lawn crypt space dies before completion of the related lawn crypt section, including the option to:

(A) select a replacement lawn crypt space or other interment acceptable to the buyer or the buyer's representative;

(B) elect temporary interment of the human remains or cremated remains in an existing mausoleum space until the undeveloped lawn crypt space is completed, at which time the cemetery shall disinter and reinter the human remains or cremated remains at no additional charge to the buyer; or

(C) cancel the contract on written notice of the buyer or the buyer's representative and receive a refund of the

entire amount paid under the contract for the undeveloped lawn crypt space if:

(i) the cemetery does not offer a temporary interment option; or

(ii) the buyer or the buyer's representative does not accept a replacement lawn crypt or other interment.

(b) A sales contract for undeveloped lawn crypt space must comply with applicable regulations of the Federal Trade Commission, including 16 C.F.R. Section 433.2, with respect to a contract payable in installments.

(c) Each notice required by this section must be written in plain language designed to be easily understood by the average consumer and must be printed in an easily readable font and type size.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 532 (H.B. 2495), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2011.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1336 (S.B. 1167), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2011.

SUBCHAPTER F. POWERS AND DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT  
RELATING TO CEMETERY BROKERS

Sec. 711.081. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Commission" means the Finance Commission of Texas.

(2) "Commissioner" means the banking commissioner of Texas.

(3) "Department" means the Texas Department of Banking.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.082. ADMINISTRATION; FEES. (a) The department shall administer Subchapter C relating to cemetery brokers.

(b) The commission may adopt reasonable rules concerning:

(1) fees to defray the cost of administering

Subchapter C;

(2) the retention and inspection of records relating to the sale or resale of the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot;

(3) changes in the management or control of a cemetery broker's business; and

(4) any other matter relating to the enforcement and administration of Subchapter C.

(c) A fee set by the commission may not produce unnecessary fund balances.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 20 (S.B. 614), Sec. 44, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 711.083. RECORDS; EXAMINATION. (a) A person acting as a cemetery broker shall maintain records in accordance with this subchapter and Section 711.0381.

(b) The department shall examine the records of each person acting as a cemetery broker if the commissioner determines the examination is necessary to:

(1) safeguard the interests of purchasers and beneficiaries of the exclusive right of sepulture in a plot; and

(2) efficiently enforce applicable law.

(c) A person may maintain and provide a record required to be maintained under this section in an electronic format if the record is reliable and can be retrieved in a timely manner.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. 52), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 711.084. EXAMINATION FEE. (a) For each examination conducted under Section 711.083, the commissioner or the commissioner's agent shall impose on the cemetery broker a fee in an amount set by the commission under Section 711.082.

(b) The amount of the fee must be sufficient to cover:

(1) the cost of the examination, including:

(A) salary and travel expenses for department

employees, including travel to and from the place where the records are kept; and

(B) any other expense necessarily incurred in conducting the examination;

(2) the equitable or proportionate cost of maintaining and operating the department; and

(3) the cost of enforcing this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 220 (H.B. [52](#)), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2013.