

## CHAPTER 155.

## CORPSES.

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**155.01 Transportation.** (1) No human corpse shall be accepted for transportation, unless prepared in conformity to the rules and regulations of the state board of health.

(2) Disinterred corpses are declared dangerous to health, and shall not be transported unless each corpse is accompanied by a separate permit from the local health officer for removal, showing the name, age, place, cause of death and medical attendant, the point to which to be shipped, and the undertaker in charge and attached to such permit the consent of the state board of health. Local health officers shall refuse permit when the cause of death is given as heart failure unless the physician in charge states that the cause was not diphtheria.

**155.02 Disposal of unclaimed corpses.** (1) **NOTICE TO RELATIVES.** When an inmate of any state, county or municipal institution dies, the superintendent or other person in charge of the institution shall immediately notify a relative of the decedent. A public officer having the possession or the disposition of a corpse shall immediately notify a relative of the decedent. If no relative is known, or discoverable by use of ordinary diligence, notice may be dispensed with.

(2) **TIME ALLOWED RELATIVES TO ACT.** The superintendent shall wait 48 hours after death, and other public officers 48 hours after taking possession, for the relatives to act. If they fail to arrange for taking charge of the corpse within said 48 hours, the superintendent or other officer may proceed as provided in this section, but relatives or friends may take over at any time before the corpse has been delivered pursuant to subsection (3).

(3) Where no relative of a deceased is known or discoverable the superintendent or other public officer shall not dispose of the corpse of such deceased pursuant to subsection (3) until at least 5 days after death, except that such corpse may be released for burial to any friend of the deceased not less than 48 hours after death.

(3) **NOTICE TO UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE.** If the corpse is in the Mendota state hospital district, the university of Wisconsin may be notified that it may have the corpse. If the corpse is in the Winnebago state hospital district, Marquette university or any accredited school of mortuary science at Milwaukee may be notified that it may have the corpse. The university or college so notified shall immediately inform the superintendent or public officer whether it desires to have the corpse. If it does, the corpse shall be delivered accordingly, properly encased, to the most available facility for transportation to the consignee, the consignee to pay the cost of transportation.

(4) **STANDING APPLICATIONS.** If there are advance applications for such bodies, by Marquette university or any accredited school of mortuary science, such superintendent or public officer shall make an equitable distribution between them.

(5) **OTHER DISPOSITION.** If the corpse is not disposed of under preceding provisions of this section, the superintendent or public officer shall properly bury it.

**155.03 Restrictions on use of bodies for anatomical purposes; embalming such bodies; delivery of bodies to relatives.** (1) The corpse of one who died with smallpox, diphtheria or scarlet fever, or who in his last sickness shall request to be buried or cremated, and of a stranger or traveler who suddenly died, shall not be disposed of under section 155.02 (3), and no person having charge of a corpse authorized to be so disposed of shall sell or deliver it to be used outside the state.

(2) Upon receipt of the corpse by a university or college pursuant to section 155.02 (3) it shall be properly embalmed and retained for 12 days before being used or dismembered and shall be delivered to any relative claiming it upon payment of expenses incurred and satisfactory proof of relationship.

**155.04 Penalty.** Any officer or person having a corpse in charge, and refusing to report and deliver it, when required by this chapter, or violating the provisions forbidding sale or delivery thereof, to be used outside the state, shall be liable to the person, university or medical school aggrieved, in the sum of fifty dollars.

155.05 Post mortem examinations. Consent for a licensed physician to conduct a post mortem examination of the body of a deceased person shall be deemed sufficient when given by whichever one of the following assumes custody of the body for purposes of burial: Father, mother, husband, wife, child, guardian, next of kin, or in the absence of any of the foregoing, a friend, or a person charged by law with the responsibility for burial. If 2 or more such persons assume custody of the body, the consent of one of them shall be deemed sufficient.