

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1032

C 176 L 91
Synopsis As Enacted

Brief Description: Providing county reimbursement for selected transportation of human remains.

By Representatives Haugen, Ferguson, Cooper, Nealey and Chandler.

House Committee on Local Government
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Governmental Operations

Background: A county is not allowed to charge for the removal of any body to the county morgue or for the care of a body at the county morgue. After investigation, and at the request of relatives or friends, the county is required to deliver the body to friends at any point in the city without charge.

One person a year is trained in forensic pathology through a fellowship program in forensic pathology at the University of Washington's School of Medicine.

The state toxicology laboratory is overseen by a nine-member Washington State Death Investigation Council, consisting of various law enforcement officials, one state legislator, and one pathologist in private practice. This council and the president of the University of Washington control the laboratory's operations and make recommendations on cost-efficient improvements in death investigations.

Three dollars of the charge imposed for issuing a certified copy of certain vital statistic records, such as death certificates, is placed into the death investigations account and used to finance various activities, including the state toxicology laboratory, the state dental investigation system, the state death investigations council, and the state forensic pathology fellowship program.

Summary: A county is responsible for paying the reasonable costs of transporting human remains whenever the coroner or medical examiner assumes jurisdiction over human remains and directs the remains to be transported by a funeral establishment and either the funeral establishment transporting the remains is not providing the funeral or

disposition services or the funeral establishment providing the funeral or disposition services is required to transport the remains to a facility other than its own.

Any transportation costs or other costs incurred after the coroner or medical examiner releases jurisdiction over human remains are not to be borne by the county, except for the costs related to paying for the burial of indigent persons, and indigent veterans and their family members, or costs incurred by the county while operating a county cemetery.

The Washington State Death Investigations Council and the chairperson of the Pathology Department of the University of Washington's School of Medicine are jointly responsible for administering the state forensic pathology fellowship program and determining the program's budget and the annual salary of the fellow.

The statute that provides for disbursements from the death investigations account is altered to clarify that disbursements are made to: (1) the state toxicology laboratory; (2) counties for the costs of certain autopsies, (3) the University of Washington for the state forensic pathology fellowship program; (4) the state patrol to partially fund the dental identification system; (5) the criminal justice training commission for training county coroners, medical examiners, and their staffs, and (6) the state death investigations council.

The Washington State Death Investigations Council is directed to develop training on sudden, unexplained child death. The training is to be offered to responders, coroners, medical examiners, prosecuting attorneys serving as coroners, and investigators, on both a voluntary basis through their various associations and as a course offering at the Criminal Justice Training Center.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98	0	
Senate	45	0	(Senate amended)
House	96	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 28, 1991