

Chapter DHS 136

EMBALMING STANDARDS

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Note: Chapter HSS 136 was renumbered chapter HFS 136 under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 1., Stats., and corrections made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats., [Register, January, 1997, No. 493](#). Chapter HFS 136 was renumbered to chapter DHS 136 under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 1., Stats., and corrections made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., [Register January 2009 No. 637](#).

DHS 136.01 Minimum embalming standards. Rules in this chapter establish minimum standards for embalming dead human bodies.

History: Cr. [Register, November, 1980, No. 299](#), eff. 12-1-80.

DHS 136.02 Definitions. (1) “Embalming” means the use of procedures specified in this chapter for the preservation and disinfection of dead human bodies.

(2) “Embalming fluid” means a chemical solution injected in arteries, and placed in body cavities, to preserve and disinfect a dead human body.

(3) “Autopsy compound” means an absorbent powder or gel desiccant used to preserve, disinfect and harden body organs after autopsy or the remains of a dead human body in the state of advanced decomposition.

History: Cr. [Register, November, 1980, No. 299](#), eff. 12-1-80.

DHS 136.03 License or certificate required. (1) No person may embalm a dead human body unless the person holds a funeral director’s license, pursuant to ss. [445.04](#) to [445.06](#), Stats., or an apprentice funeral director’s certificate pursuant to s. [445.095](#), Stats.

(2) Embalming may only be performed in:

(a) Funeral establishments holding a current establishment permit issued by the funeral directors examining board.

(b) Hospitals.

(c) Facilities approved by a local medical examiner or coroner if a disaster occurs.

(d) Private homes as provided in ch. [DHS 135](#).

(e) Mortuary schools accredited by the American board of funeral service education or otherwise deemed to be equivalent by the funeral directors examining board.

(f) Medical schools approved by the medical examining board.

Note: See s. [DHS 135.05](#) for additional restrictions on preparation of dead human bodies.

History: Cr. [Register, November, 1980, No. 299](#), eff. 12-1-80; correction in (2) (d) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats., [Register, August, 1995, No. 476](#); am. (1) and (2), [Register, January, 1997, No. 493](#), eff. 2-1-97; CR 04-040: am. (2) (a) to (d), cr. (2) (e) and (f) [Register November 2004 No. 587](#), eff. 12-1-04; correction in (2) (d) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., [Register January 2009 No. 637](#).

DHS 136.04 Preparation of bodies prior to embalming. (1) Prior to embalming, or prior to public viewing or final disposition of the body if embalming is not performed, the funeral director shall do all of the following:

(a) Remove all clothing from the body and wash the entire body thoroughly with a germicidal soap or detergent;

(b) Clean the body orifices and treat with a topical disinfectant; and

(c) Perform pars. (a) and (b) in compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, [29 CFR 1910.1030](#).

(2) The funeral director shall return clothing removed from a dead human body to the family or other appropriate individual. Any soiled clothing shall be disinfected and sanitized before it is returned.

History: Cr. [Register, November, 1980, No. 299](#), eff. 12-1-80; r. and recr., [Register, January, 1997, No. 493](#), eff. 2-1-97.

DHS 136.05 Embalming procedures. In every embalming, the embalmer shall perform at least the following procedures:

(1) **ARTERIAL INJECTION.** (a) For each 50 pounds of body weight, at least one gallon of arterial embalming fluid shall be injected into the arteries of the body. The embalming fluid should be diluted to the percentage of concentration recommended by the manufacturer of the embalming fluid.

(b) Multiple injection sites shall be used if arterial circulation is impaired by:

1. Arterial blockage
2. Trauma
3. Autopsy procedures

(2) **TREATMENT OF BODY CAVITIES.** The embalmer shall treat body cavities by:

(a) Removing liquids and semi-solids contained in the body by aspiration;

(b) Injecting in body cavities at least 8 ounces of concentrated cavity chemicals for each 50 pounds of body weight except that no more than 32 ounces must be injected for body weight in excess of 200 pounds; and

(c) Repeating cavity treatment if distension or purging occurs after respiration.

(3) **TREATMENT AFTER AUTOPSY.** The embalmer shall treat bodies after autopsy by:

(a) Hypodermically injecting embalming fluid into areas where the arterial system has been destroyed by autopsy procedures;

(b) Removing the visceral contents placed in the body after autopsy and immersing the contents in concentrated cavity chemicals or other accepted embalming chemicals for at least one hour; and

(c) Applying an autopsy compound to the visceral contents following replacement of the contents in the body.

History: Cr. [Register, November, 1980, No. 299](#), eff. 12-1-80.

DHS 136.06 Treatment for advanced decomposition. Bodies in a state of advanced decomposition shall be embalmed according to procedures specified in s. [DHS 136.05](#) unless the degree of decomposition prevents use of those procedures in which case the embalmer shall:

(1) Cover the body in cotton saturated with liquid disinfectant, disinfectant gel or powder; and

(2) Place the body in an impermeable disaster or body pouch and completely seal the pouch.

History: Cr. Register, November, 1980, No. 299, eff. 12-1-80.

DHS 136.07 Partial embalming. If only partial embalming is requested, the body shall be prepared as specified in s. DHS 136.04 and only procedures authorized by next of kin or other designated persons may be performed.

History: Cr. Register, November, 1980, No. 299, eff. 12-1-80.