

STATE OF NEW YORK

3338

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 29, 2019

Introduced by M. of A. ORTIZ, RAIA -- read once and referred to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions

AN ACT to amend the not-for-profit corporation law, in relation to disposition of unclaimed cremated remains of a veteran

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 1517 of the not-for-profit corporation law, as
2 added by chapter 579 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:
3 § 1517. Crematory operations.

4 Cemetery corporations that operate a crematory shall have the follow-
5 ing duties and obligations:

6 (a) Maintenance and privacy. (1) A crematory facility shall be main-
7 tained in a clean, orderly, and sanitary manner, with adequate venti-
8 lation and shall have a temporary storage area available to store the
9 remains of deceased human beings pending disposition by cremation, the
10 interior of which shall not be accessible to the general public.

11 (2) Entrances and windows of the crematory facility shall be main-
12 tained at all times to secure privacy, including (i) doors shall be
13 tightly closed and rigid; (ii) windows shall be covered; and (iii)
14 entrances shall be locked and secured when not actively attended by
15 authorized crematory personnel.

16 (b) Cremation process. (1) The cremation process shall be conducted in
17 privacy. No person except authorized persons shall be admitted into the
18 retort area, holding facility, or the temporary storage facility while
19 the remains of deceased human beings are being cremated. Authorized
20 persons, on admittance, shall comply with all rules of the crematory
21 corporation and not infringe upon the privacy of the remains of deceased
22 human beings.

23 (2) The following are authorized persons: (i) licensed, registered
24 funeral directors, registered residents, and enrolled students of mortu-
25 ary science; (ii) officers and trustees of the cemetery corporation;

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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(iii) authorized employees or their authorized agents of the cemetery corporation; (iv) public officers acting in the discharge of their duties; (v) authorized instructors of funeral directing schools; (vi) licensed physicians or nurses; and (vii) members of the immediate family of the deceased and their authorized agents and designated representatives.

(c) Identification of deceased human beings. (1) No crematory shall cremate the remains of any deceased human being without the accompanying cremation permit, required pursuant to section four thousand one hundred forty-five of the public health law which permit shall constitute presumptive evidence of the identity of the said remains. In addition, all crematories situated outside the city of New York, must comply with paragraph (b) of subdivision two of section four thousand one hundred forty-five of the public health law pertaining to the receipt for the deceased human being. From the time of such delivery to the crematory, until the time the crematory delivers the cremains as directed, the crematory shall be responsible for the remains of the deceased human being. Further, a cremation authorization form must accompany the permit required in section four thousand one hundred forty-five of the public health law. This form, provided or approved by the crematory, must be signed by the next of kin or authorizing agent attesting to the permission for the cremation of the deceased, and disclosing to the crematory that such body does not contain a battery, battery pack, power cell, radioactive implant, or radioactive device, if any, and that these materials were removed prior to the cremation process.

(2) Upon good cause being shown rebutting the presumption of the identity of such remains, the cremation shall not commence until reasonable confirmation of the identity of the deceased human being is made. This proof may be in the form of, but not limited to, a signed affidavit from a licensed physician, a member of the family of the deceased human being, the authorizing agent or a court order from the state supreme court within the county of the cemetery corporation. Such proof shall be provided by the authorizing agent.

(3) The crematory shall have a written plan to assure that the identification established by the cremation permit accompanies the remains of the deceased human being through the cremation process and until the identity of the deceased is accurately and legibly inscribed on the container in which the cremains are placed.

(d) Opening of container holding the remains of the deceased human being. (1) The casket, alternative container, or external wrappings holding the remains of the deceased human being shall not be opened after delivery to the crematory unless there exists good cause to confirm the identity of the deceased, or to assure that no material is enclosed which might cause injury to employees or damage to crematory property, or upon reasonable demand by members of the immediate family or the authorized agent.

(2) In such instances in which the casket, alternative container, or wrappings are opened after delivery to the crematory, such action shall only be conducted by the licensed funeral director or registered resident delivering the remains of the deceased human being and if necessary, with the assistance of crematory personnel and a record shall be made, which shall include the reason for such action, the signature of the person authorizing the opening thereof, and the names of the person opening the container and the witness thereto, which shall be retained in the permanent file of the crematory. The opening of the container shall be conducted in the presence of the witness and shall comply with

1 all rules and regulations intended to protect the health and safety of
2 crematory personnel.

3 (e) Ceremonial casket cremation disclosure. In those instances in
4 which the remains of deceased human beings are to be delivered to a
5 crematory in a casket that is not to be cremated with the deceased,
6 timely disclosure thereof must be made by the person making the funeral
7 arrangements to the crematory that prior to cremation the remains of the
8 deceased human being shall be transferred to an alternative container.
9 Such signed acknowledgement of the authorizing person, that the timely
10 disclosure has been made, shall be retained by the crematory in its
11 permanent records.

12 (f) Transferring remains. (1) The remains of a deceased human being
13 shall not be removed from the casket, alternative container, or external
14 wrappings in which it is delivered to the crematory unless explicit,
15 signed authorization is provided by the person making funeral arrange-
16 ments or by a public officer discharging his or her statutory duty,
17 which signed authorization shall be retained by the crematory in its
18 permanent records.

19 (2) When the remains of a deceased human being are to be transferred
20 to an alternative container, the transfer shall be conducted in privacy
21 with dignity and respect and by the licensed funeral director or regis-
22 tered resident who delivered those remains and if necessary, with the
23 assistance of crematory personnel. The transferring operation shall
24 comply with all rules and regulations intended to protect the health and
25 safety of crematory personnel.

26 (g) Commingling human remains. The cremation of remains of more than
27 one deceased human being in a retort at any one time is unlawful, except
28 upon the explicit, signed authorization provided by the persons making
29 funeral arrangements and the signed approval of the crematory, which
30 shall be retained by the crematory in its permanent records.

31 (h) Processing of cremains. (1) Upon the completion of the cremation
32 of the remains of a deceased human being, the interior of the retort
33 shall be thoroughly swept so as to render the retort reasonably free of
34 all matter. The contents thereof shall be placed into an individual
35 container and not commingled with other cremains. The cremation permit
36 shall be attached to the individual container preparatory to final proc-
37 essing.

38 (2) A magnet and sieve, or other appropriate method of separation, may
39 be used to divide the cremains from unrecognizable incidental or foreign
40 material.

41 (3) The incidental and foreign material of the cremation process shall
42 be disposed of in a safe manner in compliance with all sanitary rules
43 and regulations as byproducts.

44 (4) The cremains shall be pulverized until no single fragment is
45 recognizable as skeletal tissue.

46 (5) The pulverized cremains shall be transferred to a sealable
47 container or containers whose inside dimension shall be of suitable size
48 to contain the entire cremains of the person who was cremated.

49 (6) The prescribed sealable container or containers shall be accurate-
50 ly and legibly labeled with the identification of the human being whose
51 cremains are contained therein, in a manner acceptable to the division
52 of cemeteries.

53 (i) Disposition of cremains. The authorizing agent shall be responsi-
54 ble for the final disposition of the cremains. Cremains must be disposed
55 of by placing them in a grave, crypt, or niche, by scattering them in a
56 designated scattering garden or area, or in any manner whatever on the

1 private property of a consenting owner or by delivery to the authorizing
2 agent or a person specifically designated by the authorizing agent. Upon
3 completion of the cremation process, if the cemetery corporation has not
4 been instructed to arrange for the interment, entombment, inurnment or
5 scattering of the cremains, the cemetery corporation shall deliver the
6 cremains to the individual specified on the cremation authorization form
7 or the funeral firm of record. The delivery may be made in person or by
8 registered mail. Upon receipt of the cremains, the individual receiving
9 them may transport them in any manner in the state without a permit, and
10 may dispose of them in accordance with this section. After delivery, the
11 cemetery corporation shall be discharged from any legal obligation or
12 liability concerning the cremains. If, after a period of one hundred
13 twenty days from the date of the cremation, the authorizing agent has
14 not instructed the cemetery corporation to arrange for the final dispo-
15 sition of the cremains or claimed the cremains, the cemetery corporation
16 may dispose of the cremains in any manner permitted by this section. The
17 cemetery corporation, however, shall keep a permanent record identifying
18 the site of final disposition. The authorizing agent shall be responsi-
19 ble for reimbursing the cemetery corporation for all reasonable expenses
20 incurred in disposing of the cremains. Upon disposing of the cremains,
21 the cemetery corporation shall be discharged from any legal obligation
22 or liability concerning the cremains. Except with the express written
23 permission of the authorizing agent, no person shall:

24 (1) dispose of cremains in a manner or in a location so that the
25 cremains are commingled with those of another person. This prohibition
26 shall not apply to the scattering of cremains at sea, by air, or in an
27 area located in a cemetery and used exclusively for those purposes; and

28 (2) place cremains of more than one person in the same temporary
29 container or urn.

30 (j) Disposition of unclaimed cremated remains of a veteran. (1) Pursu-
31 ant to the requirements of paragraph (i) of this section, if, upon
32 completion of the cremation process, the cemetery corporation has not
33 been instructed to arrange for the interment, entombment, inurnment or
34 scattering of the cremains of an individual known to be a veteran and
35 provided a diligent effort has been made to locate and notify the next
36 of kin or authorizing agent that signed the cremation authorization for
37 the deceased veteran, after a period of one hundred twenty days from the
38 date of the cremation, where the authorizing agent has not instructed
39 the cemetery corporation to arrange for the final disposition of the
40 cremains or claimed the cremains, the cemetery corporation may also
41 dispose of the cremains in any manner permitted by this section or by
42 relinquishing possession of veterans' cremains for disposition by a
43 veterans' organization that qualifies as a section 501(c)(3) or
44 501(c)(19) tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code, or a
45 federally chartered veterans' service organization. The cemetery corpo-
46 ration, however, shall keep a permanent record identifying the veterans'
47 organization receiving the remains and the site designated for final
48 disposition by the organization. The method of disposition shall be made
49 pursuant to this section and shall be directed to a section of a ceme-
50 tery corporation where veterans are memorialized by a veteran's marker
51 if eligible, a veterans' section of a cemetery corporation or a veter-
52 ans' cemetery if the deceased veteran is eligible for interment in such
53 a manner. Such interment, entombment, inurnment or scattering of the
54 cremains of an individual known to be a veteran by such a veterans'
55 organization shall occur within sixty days. The authorizing agent shall
56 be responsible for reimbursing the cemetery corporation or the veterans'

1 organization for all reasonable expenses incurred in disposing of the
2 cremains. Upon disposition of the cremains, the cemetery corporation and
3 the veterans' organization as defined in this section shall be
4 discharged from any legal obligation or liability concerning the
5 cremains. Except with the express written permission of the authorizing
6 agent, no person shall:

7 (i) dispose of cremains in a manner or in a location so that the
8 cremains are commingled with those of another person. This prohibition
9 shall not apply to the scattering of cremains at sea, by air, or in an
10 area located in a cemetery and used exclusively for those purposes; and

11 (ii) place cremains of more than one person in the same temporary
12 container or urn.

13 (2) For the purposes of this paragraph, "diligent effort" shall mean a
14 reasonable effort, and includes a certified letter, delivery receipt
15 requested, mailed to the next of kin or authorizing agent that signed
16 the cremation authorization.

17 (k) Crematory operation certification. Any employee of a crematory
18 whose function is to conduct the daily operations of the cremation proc-
19 ess shall be certified by an organization approved by the division of
20 cemeteries. Proof of such certification must be posted in the crematory
21 and available for inspection at any time. Any new employees of a crema-
22 tory required to be certified under this section shall be certified
23 within one year of their employment. Any employees of a crematory
24 required to be certified under this section and retained prior to the
25 effective date of this paragraph shall be certified within one year of
26 such effective date. Renewal of such certification shall be completed
27 every five years from the date of certification.

28 § 2. This act shall take effect November 11, 2020.