

TITLE 31. HEALTH
CHAPTER 21. **DEAD BODIES**
ARTICLE 3. **OFFENSES**

§ 31-21-44. Wanton or malicious removal of dead body from grave or disturbance of contents of grave; receipt, retention, disposal, or possession of unlawfully removed dead body or bodily part

(a) It is unlawful for any person wantonly or maliciously to:

(1) Remove the dead body of a human being from any grave or other place of interment or from any vault, tomb, or sepulcher; or

(2) Otherwise disturb the contents of any grave or other place of interment or any vault, tomb, or sepulcher.

(b) It is unlawful for any person to receive, retain, dispose of, or possess the dead body or any bodily part of a human being knowing it to have been removed unlawfully from any grave or other place of interment or any vault, tomb, or sepulcher. This subsection shall not apply to any person having duties imposed upon that person relating to the possession or disposition of dead bodies while in the performance of said duties, which persons shall include law enforcement personnel, coroners and medical examiners, operators of funeral establishments, cemetery operators, and medical and medical laboratory personnel.

(c) Any person who violates any provision of this Code section shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one year nor more than five years, or by both such imprisonment and fine.

HISTORY: Code 1933, § 88-2710.1, enacted by Ga. L. 1980, p. 1434, § 1; Ga. L. 1989, p. 360, § 1.

§ 31-21-44.1. Abuse of dead body

(a) (1) A person commits the offense of abuse of a dead body if, prior to interment and except as otherwise authorized by law, such person willfully defaces a dead body while the dead body is lying in state or is prepared for burial, showing, or cremation whether in a funeral establishment, place of worship, home, or other facility for lying in state or at a grave site. The lawful presence of the offender at a place where the dead body is abused shall not be a defense to a prosecution under this Code section.

(2) A person who is providing care to another person, other than in a hospital, either on a permanent or temporary basis, shall, upon the death of such person while in such person's care, be required to notify a local law enforcement agency or coroner or a relative of such deceased person within six hours of the discovery of the death of such person. Any person who intentionally violates the provisions of this paragraph shall commit the offense of abuse of a dead body.

(b) Any person who violates subsection (a) of this Code section shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than three years.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 31-21-44.1, enacted by Ga. L. 1995, p. 569, § 1; Ga. L. 1997, p. 1460, § 1; Ga. L. 1998, p. 128, § 31.

§ 31-21-44.2. Throwing away or abandonment of dead bodies prohibited; punishment

(a) (1) Any person who throws away or abandons any dead human body or portion of such dead body shall commit the offense of abandonment of a dead body.

(2) It shall not be an offense under this subsection to make final disposition of a dead human body or portion of such dead body under a death certificate issued under Chapter 10 of this title or the law of another jurisdiction by interment, entombment, inurnment, scattering of cremated remains, burial at sea, or any means otherwise authorized by law; nor shall it be an offense under this subsection for any law enforcement personnel, medical or medical laboratory personnel, hospital personnel, coroner or medical examiner, funeral director, embalmer, crematory operator, or cemetery operator to perform those duties or acts relating to possession or disposition of a dead human body or portion of such dead body which are otherwise imposed or authorized by law or lawful contract; nor shall use of a dead human body or portion of such dead body at or by an accredited medical school, dental school, college, or university for education, research, or advancement of medical or dental science or therapy be an offense under this subsection.

(b) Any person who commits an offense of abandonment of a dead body as provided by subsection (a) of this Code section shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than three years.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 31-21-44.2, enacted by Ga. L. 2002, p. 641, § 1.

§ 31-21-45. Public exhibit or display of dead human bodies of American Indians or American Indian human remains

(a) After December 1, 1992, it shall be unlawful to exhibit or display to the public dead human bodies of American Indians or American Indian human remains except in connection with:

(1) Funeral or burial services;

(2) Education or instruction as part of a course of study at an accredited university, college, or school; or

(3) Educational exhibits or displays as may be allowed only with the express written permission of the lineal descendants of the deceased where such descendants can be identified or by the agent of the deceased's estate or, where there is no lineal descendant or agent of the deceased's estate, by the Council on American Indian Concerns created by Code Section 44-12-280.

(b) Any person who violates this Code section is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than two years.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 31-21-45, enacted by Ga. L. 1992, p. 1790, § 4; Ga. L. 2000, p. 136, § 31.

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