

CHAPTER 143

AN ACT concerning the natural organic reduction of human remains and amending and supplementing P.L.1952, c.340.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 3 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-34) is amended to read as follows:

C.45:7-34 Definitions.

3. As used in P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.):

(a) "Board" means the State Board of Mortuary Science of New Jersey.

(b) "Embalming" means the disinfecting or preservation of a dead human body, entirely or in part by the use of chemical substances, fluids or gases in the body, or by introduction of the same into the body by vascular or hypodermic injection or by direct application into the organs or cavities.

(c) "Funeral directing" means (1) the engaging in or conducting or holding one's self out as being engaged in or conducting the preparation (other than embalming) for burial or disposal and the direction or supervision of burial or disposal of dead human bodies; (2) maintaining, using, or operating a mortuary; or (3) in connection with one's name or mortuary using the words "mortician" or "funeral director" or "undertaker" or any other words or title of like import or signification.

"Funeral directing" also means the engaging in or making, or holding one's self out as being engaged in or making, funeral arrangements, including at need funeral arrangements or preneed funeral arrangements, or the offering or holding one's self out as offering the opportunity to purchase or enroll in a prepaid funeral agreement. As used in this definition, "funeral arrangements," "at need funeral arrangements," "preneed funeral arrangements" and "prepaid funeral agreement" shall have the same meaning as they are defined in section 1 of P.L.1993, c.147 (C.45:7-82).

(d) "Mortuary and embalming science" means embalming and funeral directing, as the same are herein defined.

(e) "Mortuary science" means funeral directing as the same is herein defined.

(f) "Practitioner of mortuary and embalming science" means a qualified person who practices or engages in mortuary and embalming science, as the same is herein defined and who (1) shall be licensed under the provisions of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.) as a practitioner of mortuary and embalming science; (2) holds a license as both an embalmer and a funeral director under the provisions of any prior law or laws of this State; (3) holds a license as an embalmer under the provisions of any prior law or laws of this State and shall have been licensed as a funeral director; or (4) holds a license as a funeral director under the provisions of any prior law or laws of this State and shall have been licensed as an embalmer.

(g) "Practitioner of mortuary science" means a person who practices or engages in funeral directing and is licensed pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.).

(h) "Mortuary" means any place or premises devoted to or used in the care and preparation for burial, disposition, or transportation of dead human bodies or any specifically designated location or address where any person or persons shall hold forth that he, she, or they are engaged in the practice of mortuary science, embalming or funeral directing, and shall mean and include any premises of any kind whatsoever in which mortuary science in any of its branches is practiced or in which more than five funerals may be conducted in any calendar year, except publicly owned buildings, places of worship, and meeting places of fraternal organizations.

(i) "Registered intern" means a person who is duly registered with the board and who is engaged in the State of New Jersey in learning to practice as a practitioner of mortuary and embalming science or as a practitioner of mortuary science under the personal instruction and supervision of a person duly licensed as a practitioner of mortuary and embalming science or as a practitioner of mortuary science, as appropriate, and who has an annual case volume as hereinafter provided in section 18 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-49). A person seeking licensure as a practitioner of mortuary science may learn to practice as a registered intern in mortuary science from a licensed practitioner in mortuary and embalming science, provided that such training solely focuses on funeral directing.

(j) "Natural organic reduction" or "controlled supervised decomposition" means the contained, accelerated conversion of human remains into a soil-like product.

(k) "Natural organic reduction facility" means a secure structure, room, or other space within a registered mortuary or on registered mortuary property devoted to the process of natural organic reduction of a human body.

2. Section 7 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-38) is amended to read as follows:

C.45:7-38 Rules and regulations.

7. The board is authorized and empowered to adopt such rules and regulations, not inconsistent with this entire act or any amendment or supplement which may hereafter be adopted, as shall be reasonably proper and advisable for the promotion or improvement of the standards of service, protection, and practice to be followed in the practice of mortuary science, embalming, natural organic reduction, and funeral directing by individuals, corporations, partnerships, and associations in the State of New Jersey and for and in the interest, preservation, and improvement of the public health, morals, safety, and welfare.

In addition to the powers otherwise herein granted to the board, the board is specifically empowered to adopt rules and regulations concerning the following:

- (a) the manner in which a mortuary or funeral establishment is conducted,
- (b) establish minimum requirements for a preparation room and as to the manner in which it shall be maintained,
- (c) issuance of lists of licensees,
- (d) interns, apprentices, and preceptors,
- (e) unethical or unprofessional conduct,
- (f) practice of mortuary science or mortuary and embalming science by individuals, corporations, partnerships, and associations, and
- (g) establish minimum requirements for a natural organic reduction facility and as to the manner in which it shall be maintained and the minimum requirements for the process for conducting natural organic reduction.

3. Section 24 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-55) is amended to read as follows:

C.45:7-55 Certificate of registration for each mortuary operated, maintained or used; fee.

24. Every individual, partnership, or corporation which operates or maintains within this State a mortuary or natural organic reduction facility, or which in the usual and regular course of his or its practice makes use of a mortuary or natural organic reduction facility owned, operated, or maintained by another shall annually apply to the board for a certificate of registration for each mortuary and natural organic reduction facility operated, maintained, or used by the applicant and shall report under oath any facts requested by the board and such

individual, partnership, or corporation shall pay an annual registration fee of \$25.00 for each such mortuary or natural organic reduction facility. Upon verification of the statements thus reported and the receipt of the requisite fee, the board shall issue a certificate of registration which shall bear the date of January 1 for the year of issue and shall expire on December 31 of such year. No mortuary or natural organic reduction facility shall be operated, maintained, or used at any location by any person, firm or corporation at any location not specified in a certificate of registration issued under this section.

C.45:7-61.1 Natural organic reduction facility, requirements.

4. No person shall operate, maintain, or use a natural organic reduction facility within this State unless:

a. the individual, partnership, or corporation annually registered with the board in accordance with the provisions of section 24 of P.L.1952, c.340 (C.45:7-55) and after inspection and approval by the Department of Environmental Protection of the facility prior to its opening, which shall include a review of compliance with paragraph (2) of subsection e. of this section;

b. the certificate of registration issued by the board shall be conspicuously displayed within the natural organic reduction facility;

c. the license of the natural organic reduction operator of the natural organic reduction facility shall be conspicuously displayed within the facility;

d. the facility shall be under the immediate and personal supervision, direction, management, and control of a person duly licensed as a practitioner of mortuary science, under the provisions of P.L.1952, c. 340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), or of a person duly licensed as a funeral director under the provisions of P.L.1952, c. 340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.) or of any prior law of this State; and all natural organic reduction shall be under the immediate and personal supervision, direction, management, and control of a person duly licensed as a practitioner of mortuary science, under the provisions of P.L.1952, c. 340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.), or of a person duly licensed as a funeral director under the provisions of P.L.1952, c. 340 (C.45:7-32 et seq.) or of any prior law of this State; and

e. the construction, maintenance, and operation of the facility shall conform to the rules and regulations of:

(1) the board promulgated to safeguard and promote public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

(2) the Department of Environmental Protection with regards to the appropriate setback distance of sites for natural organic reduction remains from any drinking water well, which shall be at least 200 days' time of travel or 500 feet from the well.

C.45:7-65.6 Natural organic reduction, list of cemeteries to receive remains.

5. a. At the time arrangements for disposition are made, a funeral director shall inform a customer, in writing, that a cemetery on the list maintained by the New Jersey Cemetery Board pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection b. of this section is an option for the placement of remains of the deceased after natural organic reduction has been performed.

b. The New Jersey Cemetery Board shall:

(1) notify the State Board of Mortuary Science of New Jersey of cemeteries that express interest in and are in compliance with New Jersey Cemetery Board rules and regulations to receive remains of the deceased after natural organic reduction has been performed; and

(2) maintain a list of cemeteries that may receive remains of the deceased pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

6. a. The State Board of Mortuary Science of New Jersey shall promulgate rules and regulations as the board determines are necessary to effectuate the provisions of P.L.2025, c.143 (C.45:7-61.1 et al.).

b. The New Jersey Cemetery Board shall promulgate rules and regulations as the board determines are necessary to effectuate the provisions of section 5 of P.L.2025, c.143 (C.45:7-65.6), as the section relates to use of cemeteries.

c. The Department of Environmental Protection shall promulgate rules and regulations as the department determines are necessary to effectuate the provisions of subsection a. of section 4 of P.L.2025, c.143 (C.45:7-61.1), as the subsection relates to inspections by the department.

7. This act shall take effect on the first day of the 10th month next following enactment, except that the director may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

Approved September 11, 2025.