

AN ACT

relating to certain claims for benefits or compensation by a death investigation professional.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Sections 607.001, 607.002, and 607.003, Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

Sec. 607.001. DEFINITIONS [~~DEFINITION~~]. (a) In this chapter, "public safety employee" means a peace officer, fire fighter, detention officer, county jailer, or emergency medical services employee of this state or a political subdivision of this state.

(b) In this subchapter:

(1) "Death investigation professional" means:

(A) a justice of the peace;

(B) a death investigator employed under Article 49.23, Code of Criminal Procedure; or

(C) a medical examiner or an employee of the medical examiner's office employed under Section 3, Article 49.25, Code of Criminal Procedure.

(2) "Inquest" has the meaning assigned by Article 49.01, Code of Criminal Procedure.

Sec. 607.002. REIMBURSEMENT. (a) A public safety employee or death investigation professional who is exposed to a contagious disease is entitled to reimbursement [~~from the employing~~]

1 ~~governmental entity~~] for reasonable medical expenses incurred in
2 treatment for the prevention of the disease if:

3 (1) the disease is not an "ordinary disease of life" as
4 that term is used in the context of a workers' compensation claim;

5 (2) the exposure to the disease occurs:

6 (A) during the course of the employment for a
7 public safety employee; or

8 (B) while conducting or assisting in an inquest
9 for a death investigation professional; and

10 (3) the employee or professional requires
11 preventative medical treatment because of exposure to the disease.

12 (b) The governmental entity that employs the public safety
13 employee is responsible for reimbursing the employee for medical
14 expenses described by Subsection (a).

15 (c) The county served by the death investigation
16 professional is responsible for reimbursing the professional for
17 medical expenses described by Subsection (a).

18 Sec. 607.003. PHYSICIAN OF CHOICE. A public safety
19 employee or death investigation professional who is exposed to a
20 disease described by Section 607.002 is entitled to be treated for
21 the prevention of that disease by the physician of the employee's or
22 professional's choice.

23 SECTION 2. Section 607.004, Government Code, is amended by
24 adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

25 (a-1) A death investigation professional is entitled to
26 preventative immunization for any disease to which the death
27 investigation professional may be exposed in conducting or

1 assisting in an inquest and for which immunization is possible.

2 SECTION 3. Section 615.003, Government Code, is amended to
3 read as follows:

4 Sec. 615.003. APPLICABILITY. This chapter applies only to
5 eligible survivors of the following individuals:

6 (1) an individual:

7 (A) elected, appointed, or employed as a peace
8 officer by the state or a political subdivision of the state under
9 Article 2A.001, Code of Criminal Procedure, or other law; or

10 (B) employed as a peace officer by a private
11 institution of higher education, including a private junior
12 college, that is located in this state under Section 51.212,
13 Education Code;

14 (2) a paid probation officer appointed by the director
15 of a community supervision and corrections department who has the
16 duties set out in Section 76.002 and the qualifications set out in
17 Section 76.005, or who was appointed in accordance with prior law;

18 (3) a parole officer employed by the Texas Department
19 of Criminal Justice who has the duties set out in Section 508.001
20 and the qualifications set out in Section 508.113 or in prior law;

21 (4) a paid jailer;

22 (5) a member of an organized police reserve or
23 auxiliary unit who regularly assists peace officers in enforcing
24 criminal laws;

25 (6) a member of the class of employees of the
26 correctional institutions division formally designated as
27 custodial personnel under Section 615.006 by the Texas Board of

1 Criminal Justice or its predecessor in function;

2 (7) a jailer or guard of a county jail who is appointed
3 by the sheriff and who:

4 (A) performs a security, custodial, or
5 supervisory function over the admittance, confinement, or
6 discharge of prisoners; and

7 (B) is certified by the Texas Commission on Law
8 Enforcement;

9 (8) a juvenile correctional employee of the Texas
10 Juvenile Justice Department;

11 (9) an employee of the Health and Human Services
12 Commission [~~Department of Aging and Disability Services~~] or
13 Department of State Health Services who:

14 (A) works at the department's maximum security
15 unit; or

16 (B) performs on-site services for the Texas
17 Department of Criminal Justice;

18 (10) an individual who is employed by the state or a
19 political or legal subdivision and is subject to certification by
20 the Texas Commission on Fire Protection;

21 (11) an individual employed by the state or a
22 political or legal subdivision whose principal duties are aircraft
23 crash and rescue fire fighting;

24 (12) a member of an organized volunteer fire-fighting
25 unit that:

26 (A) renders fire-fighting services without
27 remuneration; and

(B) conducts a minimum of two drills each month,
each two hours long;

(13) an individual who:

(A) performs emergency medical services or
operates an ambulance;

(B) is employed by a political subdivision of the
state or is an emergency medical services volunteer as defined by
Section 773.003, Health and Safety Code; and

(C) is qualified as an emergency care attendant
or at a higher level of training under Section 773.046, 773.047,
773.048, 773.049, or 773.0495, Health and Safety Code;

(14) an individual who is employed or formally
designated as a chaplain for:

(A) an organized volunteer fire-fighting unit or
other fire department of this state or of a political subdivision of
this state;

(B) a law enforcement agency of this state or of a
political subdivision of this state; or

(C) the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;

(15) an individual who is employed by the state or a
political subdivision of the state and who is considered by the
governmental employer to be a trainee for a position otherwise
described by this section;

(16) an individual who is employed by the Department
of Public Safety and, as certified by the director, is:

(A) deployed into the field in direct support of
a law enforcement operation, including patrol, investigative,

1 search and rescue, crime scene, on-site communications, or special
2 operations; and

3 (B) given a special assignment in direct support
4 of operations relating to organized crime, criminal interdiction,
5 border security, counterterrorism, intelligence, traffic
6 enforcement, emergency management, regulatory services, or special
7 investigations; ~~or~~

8 (17) an individual who is employed by the Parks and
9 Wildlife Department and, as certified by the executive director of
10 the Parks and Wildlife Department, is:

11 (A) deployed into the field in direct support of
12 a law enforcement operation, including patrol, investigative,
13 search and rescue, crime scene, on-site communications, or special
14 operations; and

15 (B) given a special assignment in direct support
16 of operations relating to organized crime, criminal interdiction,
17 border security, counterterrorism, intelligence, traffic
18 enforcement, emergency management, regulatory services, or special
19 investigations;

20 (18) a justice of the peace;

21 (19) a death investigator employed under Article
22 49.23, Code of Criminal Procedure; or

23 (20) a medical examiner or an employee of the medical
24 examiner's office employed under Section 3, Article 49.25, Code of
25 Criminal Procedure.

26 SECTION 4. Subchapter C, Chapter 504, Labor Code, is
27 amended by adding Section 504.057 to read as follows:

1 Sec. 504.057. EXPEDITED PROVISION OF MEDICAL BENEFITS FOR
2 CERTAIN INJURIES SUSTAINED BY CERTAIN DEATH INVESTIGATION
3 PROFESSIONALS IN COURSE AND SCOPE OF EMPLOYMENT. (a) In this
4 section, "death investigation professional" means:

5 (1) a justice of the peace;

6 (2) a death investigator employed under Article 49.23,
7 Code of Criminal Procedure; or

8 (3) a medical examiner or an employee of the medical
9 examiner's office employed under Section 3, Article 49.25, Code of
10 Criminal Procedure.

11 (b) This section applies only to a death investigation
12 professional who sustains a serious bodily injury, as defined by
13 Section 1.07, Penal Code, in the course and scope of employment.

14 (c) The county, division, and insurance carrier shall
15 accelerate and give priority to an injured death investigation
16 professional's claim for medical benefits, including all health
17 care required to cure or relieve the effects naturally resulting
18 from a compensable injury described by Subsection (b).

19 (d) The division shall accelerate, under rules adopted by
20 the commissioner of workers' compensation, a contested case hearing
21 requested by or an appeal submitted by a death investigation
22 professional regarding the denial of a claim for medical benefits,
23 including all health care required to cure or relieve the effects
24 naturally resulting from a compensable injury described by
25 Subsection (b). The death investigation professional shall provide
26 notice to the division and independent review organization that the
27 contested case or appeal involves a death investigation

1 professional.

2 (e) Except as otherwise provided by this section, a death
3 investigation professional is entitled to review of a medical
4 dispute in the manner provided by Section 504.054.

5 SECTION 5. Section 415.021(c-2), Labor Code, is amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (c-2) In determining whether to assess an administrative
8 penalty involving a claim in which the insurance carrier provided
9 notice under Section 409.021(a-3), the commissioner shall consider
10 whether:

11 (1) the employee cooperated with the insurance
12 carrier's investigation of the claim;

13 (2) the employee timely authorized access to the
14 applicable medical records before the insurance carrier's deadline
15 to:

16 (A) begin payment of benefits; or

17 (B) notify the division and the employee of the
18 insurance carrier's refusal to pay benefits; and

19 (3) the insurance carrier conducted an investigation
20 of the claim, applied the statutory presumptions under Subchapter
21 B, Chapter 607, Government Code, and expedited medical benefits
22 under Section 504.055 or 504.057.

23 SECTION 6. The changes in law made by this Act apply to a
24 claim for benefits or compensation pending on or filed on or after
25 the effective date of this Act. A claim for benefits or
26 compensation filed before that date, other than a claim pending on
27 that date, is governed by the law in effect on the date the claim was

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1 made, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

2 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1306 was passed by the House on May 10, 2025, by the following vote: Yeas 130, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1306 was passed by the Senate on May 28, 2025, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____
Date

Governor