

**§ 130A-390. Exhumations.**

(a) In any case of death described in G.S. 130A-383 or 130A-384 where the body is buried without investigation by a medical examiner as to the cause and manner of death or where sufficient cause develops for further investigation after a body is buried as determined by a county medical examiner or the Chief Medical Examiner, the Chief Medical Examiner shall authorize an investigation and send a report of the investigation with recommendations to the appropriate district attorney. The district attorney may forward the report to the superior court judge and petition for disinterment. The judge may order that the body be exhumed and that an autopsy be performed by the Chief Medical Examiner. A report of the autopsy and other pathological studies shall be delivered to the judge. The cost of the exhumation, autopsy, transportation and disposition of the body shall be paid by the State. However, if the deceased is a resident of the county in which death or fatal injury occurred, that county shall pay the cost.

(b) Any person may petition a judge of the superior court for an order of exhumation. Upon showing of sufficient cause, the judge may order the body exhumed. The cost incurred shall be assigned to the petitioner.

(c) Without applying for a judicial exhumation order, the next-of-kin of a deceased person may have the remains exhumed, examined by the Chief Medical Examiner and redispersed. The cost shall be paid by the next-of-kin. (1983, c. 891, s. 2; 1991, c. 463, s. 3.)