

## VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

*An Act to amend and reenact § 53.1-69.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to review of death of inmates in local correctional facilities; report.*

[S 215]

Approved

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 53.1-69.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 53.1-69.1. Review of death of inmates in local correctional facilities.**

A. The Board shall have the power to review the death of any inmate who was incarcerated in a local correctional facility at the time of his death in order to determine (i) the circumstances surrounding the inmate's death, including identifying any act or omission by the facility or any employee or agent thereof that may have directly or indirectly contributed to the inmate's death, and (ii) whether the facility was in compliance with the regulations promulgated by the Board.

B. Any review conducted pursuant to this section shall be conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures for such review developed and implemented by the Board in accordance with subdivision 5 of § 53.1-5. In conducting a review pursuant to this section, the Board may exercise its power under § 53.1-6 to hold and conduct hearings, issue subpoenas, and administer oaths and take testimony thereunder. If the Board determines that it cannot adequately conduct any particular review pursuant to this section because of the conduct by the Board of another ongoing review, the Board may request that the Department assist in the conduct of such review. Department staff conducting a review pursuant to this section shall be considered agents of the Board.

C. If the Board determines during the conduct of any review pursuant to this section that it is necessary to review the operation of an entity other than the local correctional facility in order to complete the review, the Board shall request that the Office of the State Inspector General review the operation of such entity if such entity falls within the authority vested in the Office of the State Inspector General pursuant to Chapter 3.2 (§ 2.2-307 et seq.) of Title 2.2. Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of the Office of the State Inspector General to exercise any of the powers and duties set forth in Chapter 3.2 (§ 2.2-307 et seq.) of Title 2.2.

D. Upon completion of any review conducted pursuant to this section, the Board shall prepare a detailed report of the findings of any review, which shall be submitted to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, and the President pro tempore of the Senate. Such report may contain recommendations for changes to the minimum standards for the construction, equipment, administration, and operation of local correctional facilities in order to prevent problems, abuses, and deficiencies in and improve the effectiveness of such facilities. In addition, the Board may issue any order authorized under § 53.1-69 to correct any failure by the facility to comply with the Board's regulations. Except as otherwise required by law, the Board shall maintain the confidentiality of any confidential records or information obtained from a facility during the course of a review in accordance with state and federal law.

E. The Board shall publish an annual report summarizing the reviews conducted by the Board within that year. Such report shall include any trends or similarities among the deaths of inmates in local correctional facilities and present recommendations on policy changes to reduce the number of deaths in local correctional facilities. The Board shall publish such report on its website and submit the report to the Governor, the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services and the House Committee on Public Safety, the Chair of the House Committee for Courts of Justice, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, and the President pro tempore of the Senate.

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