

HEALTH & SAFETY CODE

CHAPTER 508. AREA QUARANTINE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OR TOXIC AGENT

Sec. 508.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Environmental or toxic agent" means any bacterium or other disease-producing organism, toxic substance, radioactive substance, or other hazardous substance capable of causing widespread human illness, death, or substantial negative economic impact.

(2) "Health authority" means a physician appointed as a health authority or a regional director under Chapter 121.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 1, eff. June 20, 2003.

Sec. 508.002. APPLICABILITY. This chapter applies to any circumstance in which an environmental or toxic agent is introduced into the environment, including an act of terrorism.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 1, eff. June 20, 2003.

Sec. 508.003. AREA QUARANTINE. (a) If the commissioner of public health or one or more health authorities determine that the introduction of an environmental or toxic agent into the environment has occurred, the commissioner or authorities may impose an area quarantine in the manner and subject to the procedures provided for an area quarantine imposed under Section 81.085. The commissioner of public health or a health authority may, with respect to an area quarantine imposed under this chapter, exercise any power for a response to the introduction of an environmental or toxic agent into the environment under this section that is authorized by Section 81.085 for a response to an outbreak of a communicable disease. The area quarantine must be accomplished by the least restrictive means necessary to protect public health considering the availability of resources.

(b) A quarantine imposed by a health authority under this section expires at the earlier of:

(1) the 24th hour after the time the quarantine is imposed; or

(2) the time that appropriate action to terminate the quarantine or impose superseding requirements is taken under Chapter 418, Government Code, or is taken by the commissioner of public health under this section.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 1, eff. June 20, 2003.

Sec. 508.004. CRIMINAL PENALTY. A person commits an offense if the person knowingly fails or refuses to obey an order or instruction of the commissioner of public health or a health authority issued under this chapter and published during an area quarantine under this section. An offense under this subsection is a felony of the third degree.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 1, eff. June 20, 2003.