

TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE
CHAPTER 312. CONSTRUCTION OF LAWS

SUBCHAPTER A. CONSTRUCTION RULES FOR CIVIL STATUTES

Sec. 312.001. APPLICATION. This subchapter applies to the construction of **all civil statutes**.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 479, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 312.002. MEANING OF WORDS. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), words shall be given their ordinary meaning.

(b) If a word is connected with and used with reference to a particular trade or subject matter or is used as a word of art, the word shall have the meaning given by experts in the particular trade, subject matter, or art.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 479, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 312.003. TENSE, NUMBER, AND GENDER. (a) Words in the present or past tense include the future tense.

(b) The singular includes the plural and the plural includes the singular unless expressly provided otherwise.

(c) The masculine gender includes the feminine and neuter genders.

Sec. 312.004. GRANTS OF AUTHORITY. A joint authority given to any number of officers or other persons may be executed by a majority of them unless expressly provided otherwise.

Sec. 312.005. LEGISLATIVE INTENT. In interpreting a statute, a court shall diligently attempt to ascertain legislative intent and shall consider at all times the old law, the evil, and the remedy.

Sec. 312.006. LIBERAL CONSTRUCTION. (a) The Revised Statutes are the law of this state and shall be liberally construed to achieve their purpose and to promote justice.

(b) The common law rule requiring strict construction of statutes in derogation of the common law does not apply to the Revised Statutes.

Sec. 312.007. REPEAL OF REPEALING STATUTE. The repeal of a repealing statute does not revive the statute originally repealed.

Sec. 312.008. STATUTORY REFERENCES. Unless expressly provided otherwise, a reference to any portion of a statute, rule, or regulation applies to all reenactments, revisions, or amendments of the statute, rule, or regulation.

SUBCHAPTER B. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 312.011. DEFINITIONS. The following definitions apply unless a different meaning is apparent from the context of the statute in which the word appears:

(1) "Affidavit" means a statement in writing of a fact or facts signed by the party making it, sworn to before an officer authorized to administer oaths, and officially certified to by the officer under his seal of office.

(2) "Comptroller" means the state comptroller of public accounts.

- (3) "Effects" includes all personal property and all interest in that property.
- (4) "Governing body," if used with reference to a municipality, means the legislative body of a city, town, or village, without regard to the name or title given to any particular body.
- (5) "Justice," when applied to a magistrate, means justice of the peace.
- (6) "Land commissioner" means the Commissioner of the General Land Office.
- (7) "Month" means a calendar month.
- (8) "Oath" includes affirmation.
- (9) "Official oath" means the oath required by Article XVI, Section 1, of the Texas Constitution.
- (10) "Person" includes a corporation.
- (11) "Preceding," when referring to a title, chapter, or article, means that which came immediately before.
- (12) "Preceding federal census" or "most recent federal census" means the United States decennial census immediately preceding the action in question.
- (13) "Property" includes real property, personal property, life insurance policies, and the effects of life insurance policies.
- (14) "Signature" includes the mark of a person unable to write, and "subscribe" includes the making of such a mark.
- (15) "Succeeding" means immediately following.
- (16) "Swear" or "sworn" includes affirm or affirmed.
- (17) "Written" or "in writing" includes any representation of words, letters, or figures, whether by writing, printing, or other means.
- (18) "Year" means a calendar year.
- (19) "Includes" and "including" are terms of enlargement and not of limitation or exclusive enumeration, and use of the terms does not create a presumption that components not expressed are excluded.
- (20) "Population" means the population shown by the most recent federal decennial census.

Sec. 312.012. GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION. (a) A grammatical error does not vitiate a law. If the sentence or clause is meaningless because of the grammatical error, words and clauses may be transposed to give the law meaning.

- (b) Punctuation of a law does not control or affect legislative intent in enacting the law.

Sec. 312.013. SEVERABILITY OF STATUTES. (a) Unless expressly provided otherwise, if any provision of a statute or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the statute that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the statute are severable.

- (b) This section does not affect the power or duty of a court to ascertain and give effect to legislative intent concerning severability of a statute.

Sec. 312.014. IRRECONCILABLE AMENDMENTS. (a) If statutes enacted at the same or different sessions of the legislature are irreconcilable, the statute latest in date of enactment prevails.

- (b) If amendments to the same statute are enacted at the same session of the legislature, one amendment without reference to another, the amendments shall be harmonized, if possible, so that effect may be given to each. If the amendments are irreconcilable, the latest in date of enactment prevails.

- (c) In determining whether amendments to the same statute enacted at the same session of the legislature are irreconcilable, text that is reenacted because of the requirement of Article III, Section 36, of the

Texas Constitution is not considered to be irreconcilable with additions or omissions in the same text made by another amendment. Unless clearly indicated to the contrary, an amendment that reenacts text in compliance with that constitutional requirement does not indicate legislative intent that the reenacted text prevail over changes in the same text made by another amendment, regardless of the relative dates of enactment.

(d) In this section, the date of enactment is the date on which the last legislative vote is taken on the bill enacting the statute.

(e) If the journals or other legislative records fail to disclose which of two or more bills in conflict is latest in date of enactment, the date of enactment of the respective bills is considered to be, in order of priority:

(1) the date on which the last presiding officer signed the bill;

(2) the date on which the governor signed the bill; or

(3) the date on which the bill became law by operation of law.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 340, Sec. 4, eff. Aug. 28, 1989. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 220, Sec. 3, eff. May 23, 1997.

Sec. 312.015. QUORUM. A majority of a board or commission established under law is a quorum unless otherwise specifically provided.

Sec. 312.016. STANDARD TIME. (a) The standard time in this state is the time at the 90th meridian longitude west from Greenwich, commonly known as "central standard time."

(b) The standard time in a region of this state that used mountain standard time before June 12, 1947, is the time at the 105th meridian longitude west from Greenwich, commonly known as "mountain standard time."

(c) Unless otherwise expressly provided, a reference in a statute, order, or rule to the time in which an act shall be performed means the appropriate standard time as provided by this section.