

COVID-19 FUNERAL HOME GUIDANCE

Can a visitation service or funeral be held for a person who has died of COVID-19?

Yes, a service may be held for the individual with limited people in attendance. The guidelines for gatherings until April 1 include a limit of 10 people. From April 1 until May 10, the limit will be 50 people.

What should the funeral home do if holding visitation/funeral services?

- Consider limiting attendance to immediate family only.
- Have someone at the door with hand sanitizer to dispense to those entering.
- Frequently clean door handles and other points of contact.
- Discourage anyone who is sick from attending services.
- Consider modified seating arrangements that incorporate social distancing spacing guidelines of at least six feet. One option is creating spaces in additional rooms within a facility to live stream into if possible. An additional option is spacing out attendants among multiple rows.

What options do those unable to attend have for participating in funeral services?

Because of the limitations on mass gatherings, live streaming or recording services may be an option to utilize. The National Funeral Directors Association has guidance for webcasting.

Are people at risk if they touch the body of someone who died of COVID-19?

People should consider not touching the body of someone who has died of COVID-19. Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions are at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness. There may be less of a chance of the virus spreading from certain types of touching, such as holding the hand or hugging after the body has been prepared for viewing.

What about religious burial practices?

If washing the body or shrouding are important religious or cultural practices, families are encouraged to work with their community cultural and religious leaders and funeral home staff on how to reduce their exposure as much as possible. At a minimum, people conducting these activities should wear disposable gloves. If splashing of fluids is expected, additional PPE may be required (such as disposable gown, face shield or goggles and face mask).

What do funeral home workers need to know about handling decedent(s) who had COVID-19?

Funeral home workers should follow their routine infection prevention and control precautions when handling a decedent of COVID-19.

Can a decedent of COVID-19 be embalmed?

Yes. During embalming, funeral home workers will need to follow standard precautions including the use of additional personal protective equipment (PPE) if needed.

Still have questions?



Guidance is frequently changing as the COVID-19 situation evolves. For the most up to date information, please visit the CDC website and look for the heading "COVID-19 and Funerals"
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#funerals.

The National Funeral Directors Association also has some wonderful information and guidance concerning COVID-19 at www.nfda.org/covid-19.