



COVID 19 Announcement

Covid-19 Virus and Its Impact on our day to day operations

With the rapid developments and the changes we are experiencing as a result of the Covid-19 Virus, we are and will continue to review and update our policies and procedures with respect to how we continue to operate and manage our funeral home.

- Funeral Services provided as per the guidelines of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Alberta Funeral Service Association.

As of November 24, 2020, the following restrictions for Funeral Services are as follows:

- Funeral Services are limited to 10 Family members (not including funeral home staff)
- Funeral Receptions are not permitted

We will also ask and recommend that any in person consultations be limited to a maximum of up to 3 family members. This will help to maintain the necessary distancing to keep your family and our funeral directors healthy.

It is important to know that we will have more than adequate staff to properly service families during this time. I am grateful for the dedication demonstrated by our licensed Funeral Directors, David Stroh, Gerry Getz, Tammy Burgevitz and Tyson Zabel, as well as support staff, who will be here to professionally stand strong and serve. We will continue to offer services as recommended by the guidelines of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Alberta Funeral Service Association.

As mentioned above, changes are occurring rapidly and we will keep you up to date as our policies and guidelines evolve to keep pace with provincial health mandates. If you have specific questions about funeral services, please contact us by phone.

Warm regards, Rod Krushel, President

GUIDANCE FOR FUNERAL HOMES

Overview

Under current Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders, businesses and entities are required to:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene; and
- comply, to the extent possible, with the [COVID-19 General Relaunch Guidance](#), this guidance, and any other applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>.

This document has been developed to support funeral home directors in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among attendees (including workers, volunteers, attendees and the general public). The guidance provided outlines public health and infection prevention and control measures, specific to hosting funerals and bereavement events.

With 2 metres of distance maintained between members of different households (with the exception of [cohort families](#)), funeral **ceremonies** and funeral **receptions** are subject to the relevant capacity limits, found in the [Gathering restrictions](#) section of the alberta.ca website.

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed. Current information related to COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information.aspx>.

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

General Guidance	The following are considerations ensure that attendance restrictions for funerals and associated social gatherings can be met: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host multiple, smaller events for the deceased individual in lieu of a single, large event.• Implement protocols that enable funeral attendees to perform hand hygiene upon entry and exit.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Implement protocols for thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting event spaces between each event• Establish an online system for attendees to reserve a specific time.• Offer options for remote participation (e.g. telephone, video conference, video recordings) in conjunction with or as a replacement for in-person funerals and bereavement events, or to enable more participation.• Providing other options for people who are at greater risk of severe disease, including people over 65 years of age and people with chronic medical conditions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ For those at higher risk who choose to attend in person, consider extra precautions, such as designating times for their attendance and strongly encouraging the use of face masks by all attendees.
-------------------------	--

GUIDANCE FOR FUNERAL HOMES

	<p>To support public health contact tracing efforts in the event that an attendee tests positive, organizers should consider collecting the names and contact information of attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information is voluntary for attendees. An organization must obtain an individual’s consent and notify them about the purpose and legal authority for the collection.
<p>Physical Distancing</p>	<p>Physical distancing means maintaining at least 2 metres between attendees who are not from the same households or cohorts at all times.</p> <p>The Funeral Home Director should consider making adjustments to the funeral home to support physical distancing among staff, volunteers, and attendees of funeral events. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling and staggering entry into, and exit from, the funeral home during funeral and bereavement events (e.g. by dismissing individuals by household or section, rather than all at once). • Establishing different points of entry and exit from high traffic areas. • Ceremony organizers and venue operators should facilitate physical distancing of attendees or households/cohorts. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arranging seating so that audience members face in the same direction and so there is at least 2 metres distance between each person or household/cohort. ○ Maintaining empty seats between each household/attendee to keep 2 metres of distance; consider alternating rows of seating. ○ Assigning seats to each attendee when attendees RSVP or purchase tickets. ○ Establishing a one-way procession that keeps appropriate distance between individuals. ○ Using floor markings, signs, barriers, and staff or volunteers to maintain one-way flow of traffic and discourage gatherings in close quarters and high-traffic areas.
<p>Singing, Live Music and Performances</p>	<p>Singing, playing wind instruments or performing dance in close proximity to others are considered to be higher-risk activities, and should be carefully managed:</p> <p>Organizers of these activities should adhere to the guidance for singing and vocal performance and instrumental music.</p>
<p>Interpersonal Interactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it is natural to want to grieve together and comfort each other, hugging, touching, or passing items between attendees (e.g. tissues, gifts, or the deceased’s belongings) must be avoided, unless it is between members of the same household or cohort family.

GUIDANCE FOR FUNERAL HOMES

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious or spiritual rituals that involve physical contact between individuals should be postponed or performed in a way that does not involve physical contact. • Please follow municipal masking requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inform individuals who attend in person that mask wearing may be an option for them to further reduce the risk of transmission. ○ Even when wearing masks, attendees should always try to maintain a 2-metre distance from anyone who is not a member of their household or cohort family. • Attendees and staff should follow proper respiratory etiquette practices at all times. These practices include coughing and sneezing into the elbow or a tissue, discarding tissues into a lined garbage bin, and washing hands afterwards.
<p>Touching the Deceased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touching the deceased or their clothing is discouraged; however, if the family determines that this is an essential part of the funeral or bereavement event, it will be permitted as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hand sanitizer or soap and running, potable water is provided; and, ○ Attendees are instructed to wash or sanitize their hands thoroughly after touching the deceased, their clothing, or the coffin. • Kissing or embracing the deceased or the coffin is not recommended.
<p>Touching Shared Items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If required for personal, cultural, spiritual, or other reasons, touching of ceremonial objects (e.g. statues, religious symbols, rings) may occur if hand hygiene is practiced before and after touching the object. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individuals should be discouraged from kissing, embracing, or pressing their faces on any shared ceremonial object. • Attendees bringing gifts, cards, money, or other items for the deceased or the family should not hand them directly to the family or any other individual as this could prevent social distancing. Alternatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A designated area for attendees to place items and donations. Touching of items and donations from attendees should be minimized for the first 24 hours. If they must be handled for the purpose of transport or storage, the individual who touches them should practice proper hand hygiene before and after doing so. ○ Online donations.
<p>Food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funeral home operators that provide food services are required to follow the Food Regulation and Food Retail and Foodservices Code and existing occupational health and safety requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operators should also follow the COVID-19 General Relaunch Guidance and the Guidance for Restaurants, Cafe's, Pubs and Bars.

GUIDANCE FOR FUNERAL HOMES

Pall-bearing, and Burial Procedures, and Graveside Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where possible, the practice of pallbearing should be avoided.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If pallbearing is required or specifically requested by the family or community, pallbearers must be protected from respiratory and contact transmission hazards.○ Where the funeral services director is unable to provide masks for pallbearers, they may ask pallbearers to provide their own.○ Ensure physical distancing is maintained where possible, minimize the distance traveled to avoid exertion and heavy breathing, and wash or sanitize hands immediately after handling surfaces.• People 65 years of age or older and individuals with chronic medical conditions should not act as pallbearers, as it is difficult to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres from other pallbearers during this activity.• Individuals should perform hand hygiene before and after handling the body or casket.
Preparing the Deceased	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People who have died from COVID-19 may be buried or cremated.• Handling of the body by non-licensed persons such as religious or cultural groups, family or friends should be minimized, especially in cases where the deceased person is a known or suspected case of COVID-19.• For more information on best practices for funeral homes and other professionals that will be handling and preparing the body, review Alberta Health Service’s COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Handling of Deceased Persons.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID-19 Information for Albertans• Reducing transmission in gatherings