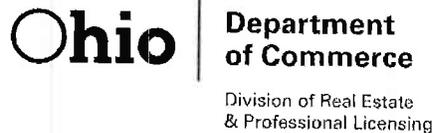


COVID-19 Guidance for Protecting Against COVID-19



The grieving of a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic can be overwhelming. The Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission, Ohio Department of Commerce-Real Estate and Ohio Funeral Directors Association recognize the need for guidance for families as they collaborate with funeral directors in planning a safe memorial ceremony for their loved ones. This document will outline best practices for families to consider ensuring safety for themselves, their family and friends.

Reducing Exposure

Since the pandemic began, there have been reports of some individuals becoming ill from attending funerals. The below strategies are recommended to reduce exposure at these activities.

- Using technology to connect virtually with family and friends during the grieving process.
- Considering modified funeral arrangements, such as limiting attendance at funerals held shortly after the time of death to a small number of immediate family members and friends; and then holding additional memorial services when social distancing guidelines are less restrictive.
- Funerals were never limited for number of attendees due to the state Public Health Orders, but check with your funeral home/place of interment/service provider to see if they have any limitations in place.
- Practicing social distancing by maintaining at least 6 feet between attendees, facility staff, and clergy or officiants when small, in-person services are held. It is not necessary to separate family members who reside in the same household.
- Considering modifications to funeral rites and rituals (for example, avoid touching the deceased person's body or personal belongings or other ceremonial objects) to make sure of everyone's safety.
- Wearing cloth face coverings while around others and outside of your home.

Funeral/Memorial Services

Since the pandemic began, there have been reports of some individuals becoming ill from attending funerals. No Public Health Order throughout the pandemic has limited or prevented the gathering size for funeral or memorial services, as such each provider has the ability to set their own standards. It is recommended that family and providers practice special precautions to limit the spread of disease. The below strategies are recommended to reduce exposure at these activities.

- Inform the family members that they can consider modified funeral arrangements, such as limiting attendance at funerals held shortly after the time of death to a small number of immediate family members and friends; and then holding additional memorial services when social distancing guidelines are less restrictive.
 - Offer to record and/or live stream events for increased visitor inclusion (music and web casting license available to all funeral homes regardless of membership status through NFDA).
 - At-need and preneed arrangement conferences should be made via telephone calls or other electronic means. In person arrangements should be limited to two people.
- Cemeteries may have established their own requirements/restrictions for graveside service. We strongly encourage communication and coordination with the cemetery.
- Practicing social distancing by maintaining at least 6 feet between attendees, facility staff, and clergy or officiants when in-person services are held. It is not necessary to separate family members who reside in the same household.
 - Educate families and visitors on best practices for social distancing and viral control etiquette (i.e. no hugging, kissing or shaking of hands; creating personal space of 6'; cough into crook of elbow).
 - Utilize rope and stanchion to aid in visitor flow and barrier for family, if desired.
 - Separate chapel chairs for the safety of each attendee.
- Considering modifications to funeral rites and rituals (for example, avoid touching the deceased person's body or personal belongings or other ceremonial objects) to make sure of everyone's safety.
- Wearing cloth face coverings while around others and outside of your home.
 - All funeral home employees must wear face coverings, unless exempted by a medical, safety or practicality concern. Document exemption and maintain in employee file for verification, if challenged.
 - Funeral home visitors are encouraged to wear a face covering, unless specifically documented legal, life, health or safety considerations and limited documented security considerations exist.
 - Funeral homes are not required to provide families/visitors masks, but if supplies can be obtained distribution of masks is encouraged.
- Establish separate funeral home entry and exit doorways.
- Post signs at entrances listing virus symptoms and request those feeling the effects to pay their respects in an alternate manner (i.e. email, written note, phone call to family).
- Place hand sanitizing stations throughout funeral home.
- Limit public calling hours. Provide separate time frame for elderly or immune compromised visitors.
- Temporarily cease catering, food, drinks and receptions. If applicable, remove candy or novelty gifts to keep hands from gravitating to a central dish.
- Restrict access to common areas, such as lounge or reception hall to prevent congregation.
- Sanitize, sanitize, sanitize

Grieving a Loved One

Grief is a normal response to losing someone important to you. When a loved one dies, it is important for friends and family to be able to share stories and memories of the person and how they influenced their lives. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing, “stay at home orders,” and limits to gatherings have affected the ability of friends and family to come together in person and grieve in typical ways. This is true regardless of whether the person’s death was due to COVID-19 or some other cause.

Fortunately, most people understand that hosting gatherings now could be dangerous to those who would want to participate. Family and friends are finding alternate ways to connect, support each other, and grieve after their loss. They understand the need to possibly plan for additional memorial services when COVID-19-related restrictions are lifted.

Take Actions to help you cope with the loss of a loved one

- Invite people to call you, or host conference calls with family members and friends to stay connected.
- Ask family and friends to share stories and pictures with you via phone, video chat, email, text message, photo sharing apps, social media, or mailed letters.
- Create a virtual memory book, blog, or webpage to remember your loved one, and ask family and friends to contribute their memories and stories.
- Coordinate a date and time for family and friends to honor your loved one by reciting a selected poem, spiritual reading, or prayer from within their own households. Some cultures practice a prolonged mourning period with multiple observances, so hosting virtual events now and in-person events later may be in keeping with these practices.
- Seek spiritual support from faith-based organizations, including religious leaders and congregations, if applicable. People who are not part of a faith tradition or religious community can seek support from other trusted community leaders and friends.
- Use grief counseling services, support groups, or hotlines, especially those that can be offered over the phone or online, or seek support from a mental healthcare provider.
- Read books about grief and loss. If you have children, read age-appropriate books with them and talk with them about how they are feeling.
- Take part in an activity that has significance to you and the loved one you have lost, such as planting flowers or a tree or preparing a favorite meal, in memory of your loved one.
- Review additional information from CDC on loss and grief, and [ways to cope with stress and anxiety](#).

Resources

- Ohio Funeral Directors Association
 - [OFDAonline.org](https://ofdaonline.org)
 - 1-800-589-6332
- National Funeral Directors Association
 - nfd.org/covid-19/technical-information

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - COVID-19 and Funerals FAQs
 - Postmortem Guidance
 - Local Emergency Management Agencies

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

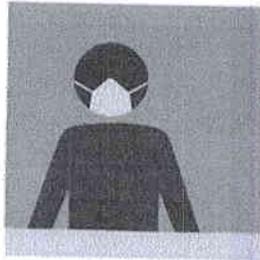
Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking these precautions.

PREVENTION

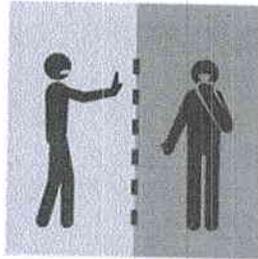
For additional information call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.



STAY HOME EXCEPT FOR WORK AND OTHER NEEDS



WEAR A FACE COVERING WHEN GOING OUT



PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING OF AT LEAST 6 FEET FROM OTHERS



SHOP AT NON-PEAK HOURS



WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH WATER AND SOAP (20 SECONDS OR LONGER)



AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE, OR MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS OR AFTER TOUCHING SURFACES



COVER YOUR MOUTH WITH A TISSUE OR SLEEVE WHEN COUGHING OR SNEEZING



CLEAN AND DISINFECT "HIGH-TOUCH" SURFACES OFTEN



DON'T WORK WHEN SICK



CALL BEFORE VISITING YOUR DOCTOR