

Anne Arundel County Department of Health COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Guidance for Funerals

This guidance is based on current information known about the COVID-19 (Coronavirus). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the AACO DOH will provide updated guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available. Please continue to check the [CDC](#) and the [AACO DOH](#) websites routinely for updated guidance.

This guidance is intended for funeral homes in Anne Arundel County. The purpose of this guidance is to educate funeral home staff, families using their services and their partners to assist in COVID-19 prevention and preparedness, and to make recommendations regarding community-level spread.

Recommendations for Funeral Homes with Confirmed Community COVID-19 Cases

Preparedness for community-level spread is of utmost importance at this time. Once confirmed cases are made public to the community, funeral homes will need to take further steps in response to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the facility. The first step should always be to speak to local public health officials. At this time, there is currently no known risk associated with being in the same room at a funeral or visitation service with the body of someone who died of COVID-19.

- ❑ For funerals taking place, limit attendance to select family and livestream funeral/memorial services for those who cannot attend; services could also be recorded and the video shared with whomever the family deems appropriate. Those who are ill and are at-risk (e.g., elderly, immune-compromised) should stay home.
- ❑ Urge attendees and funeral home staff to follow recommended healthy habits such as:
 - Social distancing, 6 feet or more between each attendee
 - Hand hygiene; frequently hand-washing with soap and water and using hand sanitizer with more than 60% alcohol to use when hand-washing stations are not available.
 - Using [“Cover Your Cough”](#) etiquette for coughing and sneezing and avoiding touching your face, eyes and mouth. Properly dispose all tissues in waste receptacles.
- ❑ People should consider not touching the body of someone who has died of COVID-19. Funeral home workers should follow their routine infection prevention and control precautions when handling a decedent who died of COVID-19.
 - 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. Other activities, such as kissing, washing, and shrouding should be avoided before, during, and after the body has been prepared, if possible.
- ❑ People conducting washing or shrouding of an infected COVID-19 body for religious or cultural practices are urged, at a minimum, to wear disposable gloves. If splashing of fluids is expected, additional personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required (such as a disposable gown, face shield or goggles and facemask).
- ❑ During embalming, follow Standard Precautions:

- Use of additional PPE if splashing is expected (e.g. disposable gown, faceshield, or goggles and a facemask.)
- Wear appropriate respiratory protection if procedures will generate aerosols or if required chemicals used in accordance with the manufacturer's labels
- Wear heavy-duty gloves over nitrile disposable gloves if there is a risk of cuts, puncture wounds, or other injuries that break the skin.
- After removal of PPE, perform hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Soap and water should be used if the hands are visibly soiled.
- Cleaning should be conducted in accordance with manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.)
- Decedents with COVID-19 can be buried or cremated, but check for any additional state requirements that may dictate the handling and disposition of the remains of individuals who have died of certain infectious diseases.
- Funeral directors should consult with the U.S. embassy of the country that will be receiving the remains for any country-specific shipping requirements and documentation. NFDA also advises consulting with the airline that will be carrying the body to determine if it has any specific requirements.

Additional Information:

CDC Resources

- [COVID-19 and Funerals](#)
- [What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)
- [What to do if you are sick with COVID-19](#)
- [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)