



Kansas City Public Health Recommendations for Death Care Professionals

| Audience | Kansas City Recommendation | Threshold for Cancellation/Closure | Additional CDC Mitigation Strategies |
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| Funeral Directors and Mortuary | Funeral gatherings with over 10 persons are prohibited under the Mayor’s Emergency Proclamation. Death Care Professionals are strongly encouraged to minimize direct interactions with and to ensure social distancing at all times. | If possible, cancel/postpone activities to avoid bringing large groups of people together during this time. Encourage families to plan memorial services after the current emergency is over. | https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf |

Follow all guidelines for “Community Settings” and/or “Health Care Settings” as appropriate on local, state or CDC websites (including but not limited to):

- Know where to find local information on COVID-19 and local trends of COVID-19 cases (Missouri state hotline - 877-435-8411, www.kcmo.gov/coronavirus).
- Encourage staff and members to stay home and notify organization leaders/administrators of illness when sick.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces (door handles, railings, chairs, product displays, keyboards, tablets, etc.) in meeting spaces/offices/chapels multiple times per day.
- Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available in building.

During this global pandemic we recognize that there is still a need for processing and final disposition of deceased persons. However, this process must happen in a manner that does not contribute to the spread of COVID-19 and protects the health of death care professionals and the families they serve. In addition to the guidelines referenced above, death care professionals should follow these additional guidelines:

- Taking Custody of The Deceased
 - If custody transfer happens at a hospital, skilled nursing facility or other medical facility, death care professionals should follow the COVID-19 infection control procedures for that facility.
 - If custody transfer happens at a private residence, death care professionals should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (at least gloves and a mask) and minimize in-person contact with occupants of the residence. Maintain distance of at least 4-6 feet from occupants of the residence. Request that family representative sign custody forms outside the residence.
 - If return of clothing or personal effects worn by the deceased at time of death is requested, those items should be sent by mail or delivery service.

- Planning Arrangements With the Family
 - Communications to plan arrangements with the family should take place by telephone, video, email or other electronic means.
 - If an in-person meeting is necessary, no more than 10 persons should be present (or less depending on room size and ability to maintain social distancing. Social distancing of 6 feet between all households/persons should be maintained throughout the meeting.
 - Death care professionals should create a space/room to allow for “touchless” transfer of clothing and personal effects from the family.

- Identification Viewings
 - Keep number of family members and staff small enough (and below 10 persons total) to maintain social distancing within designated space.
 - Pre-arrange seating to ensure adequate spacing between persons.
 - Have family members wait outside until all participants are present. Then invite each person/household to come in separately to take position in designated space.
 - After identification is complete, participants should leave in the same groupings as they entered.

- Witnessing Cremations
 - Keep number of family members small enough (and below 10 persons total) to maintain social distancing within designated space. Pre-position any paperwork requiring signature(s) and provide instructions in advance, so staff do not need to enter the viewing area while family members are present.

- Memorial Services/Funerals/Grave-Side Services
 - Recommend that the family consider holding all memorial services/funerals/grave-side services after the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. This would afford more family and friends the opportunity to participate.
 - No more than 10 persons in total may be present in the room/space where any memorial service/funeral/grave-side service is conducted. This includes funeral home/mortuary staff, clergy/officiants and family members.
 - Because of the need to maintain social distance, pall-bearers are not allowed for any service. Mechanical lifts should be used to move caskets.
 - To reduce the possibility of spreading COVID-19, activities which include touching other persons or items used by other persons [i.e. greeting lines, guest books, and shared meals (i.e. repast)] are prohibited.
 - Those attending the memorial services/funerals/grave-side services should keep 6 feet away from each other when seated or standing. Please think of the 6 feet guidance as a bubble or zone around each person/household (approximately 100 square feet), so there should be staggered seating in the pews/seats. Signs should be posted reminding staff and attendees of the 6-foot rule. Occupancy for indoor events should not exceed

20% of the total occupancy capacity. (The Kansas City Health Department has “No Handshake Zone” signs/poster boards available for pick up.)

- For grave-side services, if all staff and clergy/officiants stand a minimum distance of 6 feet away, 10 family members may gather around the grave (while maintaining social distance).
 - Attendees from the same household may elect to sit together, but distance should be maintained between other households/individuals in attendance.
 - Provide protective resources for staff and clergy/officiants.
 - Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available.
- Preparation of The Body By Family Members (Jewish and Muslim faith traditions)
 - COVID-19 is spread during close contact between persons. In this time of a global pandemic, the close contact created by having more than one family member or family members from separate households participate in these rituals represents a clear public health threat. Therefore, preparation of bodies by family members is strongly discouraged.
 - If family members choose to participate in these rituals due to religious beliefs, all participants should be warned to use gloves and masks during the entire ritual or for as long as they are within 6 feet of each other. Funeral directors and other death care professionals should not be present during these rituals.

- Definitions:

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| Death care professionals | Persons who provide services related to disposing of deceased persons; This includes those providing any service connected with funerals, cremations, memorials and burials. |
| Household | Individuals (related or not) living in the same housing unit. |
| Hand hygiene supplies | Availability of soap and warm water for hand-washing or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content used in combination with or in place of hand-washing. |
| Social distancing | Practice of maintaining at least a 6 feet perimeter between persons in public gatherings; This translates to approximately 100 square feet of space for each person/household. |

Death care professional should encourage families to coordinate between households to maximize opportunities for family members to participate. Having different family members attend different steps in the process can afford more than 8-10 family members the chance to say good-bye to the deceased. For example, the 8-10 family members who attend the Identification do not have to be the same 8-10 who attend the Final Disposition.

These guidelines are subject to repeal or amendment at any time based on the evolving COVID-19 situation here in Kansas City! Please check the City’s website frequently for updates (www.kcmo.gov/coronavirus).