



Janet T. Mills  
Governor

STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL  
AND FINANCIAL REGULATION  
35 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0035

Anne L. Head  
Commissioner

April 27, 2020

Dear Members of Maine's Faith Based Communities:

During the state of civil emergency declared by Governor Janet Mills and the US Department of Homeland Security in response to the COVID-19 health emergency, it is critically important to comply with physical distancing requirements when engaging in funeral and burial practices.

Based on the Governor's Orders, Maine CDC guidance and guidance provided by the World Health Organization, the following actions with reference to faith based funeral customs and traditions are recommended and should be carried out in conjunction with guidance provided to funeral practitioners with whom members of the Maine Faith Based communities typically engage:

Preparation of the Deceased: If the deceased is not known to have had COVID-19, a group of no more than 5 individuals is permitted to attend to and prepare the body. Preparing the body includes washing the body, tidying hair, trimming nails, or shaving. Individuals preparing the body should wear gloves for any contact with the body and wear other protective clothing such as impermeable disposable gowns or disposable gowns with impermeable aprons), medical masks and eye protection.

If the deceased is known to have had COVID-19, in addition to the conditions above, the following restrictions must be observed:

- a. Children, older people (over 60 years old) and anyone with one or more underlying medical conditions should not be involved in preparing the body, nor should they directly interact with the body.
- b. Individuals with respiratory symptoms should not participate.
- c. Embalming is not recommended to avoid excessive handling of the body.
- d. Others may observe as long as they maintain a distance of six feet from others, but in no case should there be more than 5 individuals in the room.

OFFICES LOCATED AT: 76 NORTHERN AVENUE, GARDINER, MAINE

At all times during preparation of the deceased for burial, a group of no more than 5 individuals should be present and they must practice physical distancing by separating from each other by at least 6 feet and it is recommended that all persons wear non-medical face masks.

Viewing the Deceased: Individuals viewing the deceased should be as few as possible but in no case should there be more than 5 individuals at one time in the viewing area. Those viewing the deceased should maintain distance from the body, should not kiss or touch the body, and should distance themselves from each other by at least 6 feet. Those viewing the deceased should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after the viewing. It is recommended that all persons wear non-medical face masks.

Burial of the Deceased: Burial of the deceased should follow guidelines provided to licensed funeral practitioners and funeral establishments (attached). Individuals involved in handling the body of the deceased should wear gloves and wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after removal of gloves once the burial is complete. It is recommended that all persons wear non-medical face masks.

It is important to note that some cities in Maine have implemented even stricter physical distancing guidelines that must be followed when funeral and burial services are held in those locations.

Please visit this link <https://www.maine.gov/pfr/consumer/COVID-Information> for more information that you may find helpful including links to the Maine CDC and its frequently asked questions. In addition, interim guidance from the World Health Organization on safe management of deceased individuals is available here: WHO-COVID-19-IPC\_DBMgmt-2020.1-eng.

Please find guidance to funeral practitioners and establishments here:

[http://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/professions/funeral/pdf/final\\_notice\\_funeral\\_practitioners\\_2020.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/professions/funeral/pdf/final_notice_funeral_practitioners_2020.pdf)

Thank you for your efforts to care for grieving Maine families during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Anne L. Head  
Commissioner



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