



Mississippi State Department of Health Funeral and Mortuary Guidance

Infection Control at Funeral Homes

- Utilize standard infection control practices for anyone who has died from COVID-19
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE), to include eye protection (goggles or face shield), mask or protection over the nose and mouth, and gloves should be worn by the mortician when preparing the body for embalming, especially if splashing of fluids is expected. Routine hand hygiene should be performed. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- If washing the body or shrouding are important religious or cultural practices, families are encouraged to work with their community's cultural and religious leaders and funeral home staff on how to reduce their exposure as much as possible. At a minimum, people conducting these activities should wear disposable gloves, gown, face shield or goggles and facemask, especially if splashing of fluids is expected. Routine hand hygiene should be performed. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>.
- Clean and disinfect the mortuary work area using an EPA register hospital grade disinfectant (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf).

Funeral Guidance

- Decedents can be buried or cremated in accordance with current Mississippi requirements
- The size of funeral gatherings should be within the limits currently set in your county. See <https://msdh.ms.gov/page/14,21866,420.html#gatherings>
- Funeral homes should encourage participants and families to practice social distancing (separation of at least 6 feet) at the service, wash their hands, and cover their coughs.
- Funeral homes should supply tissues and alcohol-based hand rubs and have an adequate supply of soap and paper towels in the rest rooms.
- Encourage families to scale back direct contact like handshakes, hugging, and kissing at the service or funeral.
- People who feel sick or are part of an at-risk population (elderly, immune-compromised, other underlying health conditions) should stay home.
- 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 has died of COVID-19, however participants should consider not touching or kissing the body of someone who has died of COVID-19.

Each funeral home should develop a plan to manage challenges presented with the current situation. The funeral home management should stay informed regarding current recommendations to protect their staff and families of the deceased.

Additional Resources:

- CDC COVID-19 and Funerals <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#funerals>
- CDC Resources for Businesses and Employers <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>
- CDC Interim Guidance for Collection and Submission of Postmortem Specimens from Deceased Persons Under Investigation for COVID-19, February 2020 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-postmortem-specimens.html>
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>
- <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>