

New Procedures for Witnessing Interments at VA National Cemeteries due to COVID-19

Dear Funeral Directors:

All Department of Veterans Affairs' national cemeteries remain open and continue to provide interment for Veterans and eligible individuals during this health crisis. As you are aware, on March 23rd the National Cemetery Administration temporarily discontinued committal services while continuing to allow families to witness their loved ones' interments (up to 10 individuals).

We seek your continued assistance in ensuring that those who are visiting national cemeteries as witnesses are aware of CDC and local guidelines intended to protect healthy and safety. CDC guidance is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/> Please emphasize with families that the CDC recommends those individuals who are not feeling well, have been exposed to someone who is COVID positive, or have received a COVID positive diagnosis to not leave their homes except to get medical care and to not visit public areas. NCA is offering all families the option to postpone the interment, or to proceed with the interment and provide a memorial service at a later date. Families choosing to witness should also understand our staff are closely following CDC guidelines on social distancing, to include maintaining safe distances and using personal protective equipment such as face masks and gloves.

Effective, Wednesday, April 15, 2020, to ensure social distancing at the cemetery, witnessing family members will now be asked to view the interment from their cars or the road very near their cars. Families may visit the gravesite in the days following the interment consistent with CDC guidelines and local travel restrictions.

Thank you for your cooperation,

The National Cemetery Administration