

Guidance for Funerals

The following is intended as a plain language summary of rules during the COVID-19 emergency and does not replace the need to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Follow Philadelphia's limits on the number of persons permitted to participate in events or gatherings. Limit attendance to no more than 10% maximum occupancy for outdoor services or 10 persons per 1,000 square feet, even with masks and maintaining safe distancing. Indoor services of any size are prohibited.

Protections Needed

- **Masks**
 - Encourage attendees to bring and use masks.
 - Consider having extra masks on hand to provide to attendees without one.
 - Require attendees to wear masks when on site.
 - Food and beverages may not be offered.
- **Isolate**
 - Screen all attendees for symptoms before the service and ask them not to attend if they have cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, or new loss of taste or smell.
 - It is not necessary to conduct on site temperature measurement. If you measure temperatures, use a no-touch thermometer, and do not allow anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher to remain onsite.
 - If an attendee begins to feel unwell during the service, they must leave immediately. If they are a member of a household group at the service, the household group must also leave.
 - If an attendee is found to have COVID-19 infection within 14 days after the service, contact PDPH at 215 685-5488 to report the potential exposure of other attendees.
 - Keep a record of all attendees including their contact information for 14 days after the service and share this information with public health authorities in the event that a COVID-19 case is detected.
 - Travel to Philadelphia is not recommended at this time. See also the [CDC updates](#) as well as state restrictions on travel for more information.
- **Distance**
 - Ensure adequate spacing within the outdoor venue that provides at least 6 feet of distance between attendees.
 - For venues with seating arrangements in rows, maintain at least two empty seats (or 6 feet of separation) between groups in any row.
 - For venues with alternate seating arrangements, configure chairs and tables so that guests are spaced at least 6 feet apart.
 - Use signage to encourage individuals/family groups to space themselves at least 6 feet from others.
 - Use floor decals or other visual cues to encourage spacing of at least 6 feet between attendees.

- Officiant should stand at least 10 feet from attendees during service; rope off seats as necessary to achieve this.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between attendees: rope off rows and use signage to encourage distancing.
- Encourage attendees to express support and greet each other from at least 6 feet apart rather than by hugging or shaking hands.
- Do not allow attendees to touch the decedent.
- Suspend limousine and valet parking services by funeral home employees.
- **Reduce crowds**
 - **Indoor services are prohibited.**
 - **Outdoor services may not exceed 10% of maximum occupancy or 10 persons per 1,000 square feet if occupancy is unknown, even with masks and maintaining safe distancing.**
 - Offer a virtual option to maintain a smaller group of attendees.
 - If condolence calls or home services (e.g., shiva) are conducted, gather outdoors only and follow gathering size rules.
- **Handwashing**
 - Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry and outside communal bathrooms with prominent signage promoting use.
 - Encourage frequent handwashing.
- **Clean**
 - Wipe down high-touch surfaces with disinfectant at least once every 4 hours. See [CDC guidance](#) for details.
- **Communicate**
 - Educate attendees in advance about symptoms and prevention of COVID-19.
 - Encourage attendees to download and turn on the PDPH exposure notification app to help with contact tracing.
 - Post prominent signs at entrances and other frequented areas:
 - Mandating that all attendees wear masks.
 - Mandating physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
 - Asking people who are sick or have had contact with someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days not to attend the service.
 - Encouraging people to cover coughs or sneezes.

See also:

[PA Guidance for Funeral Directors](#)
[Guidelines for Social Gatherings](#)