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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District
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Interim Guidance for Funeral Homes

This document summarizes CUPHD's recommendations regarding COVID-19 for funeral homes. This guidance will be reviewed and updated by CUPHD on April 30th, 2020 and will be extended as needed.

Updated guidance for social/physical distancing: If gatherings are necessary, limit the number of people to 10.

General Prevention

To prevent the spread of the coronavirus and protect your staff and patrons from becoming infected:

- Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap for 20 seconds
- Everyone – staff and patrons– should practice social distancing: people remaining 6 feet apart from each other as much as possible
- Staff experiencing a fever, cough, or shortness of breath should not work
 - If you have a respiratory like illness, stay home for at least 7 days after you first became ill, or for 72 hours after your fever has stopped (without the use of fever-reducing drugs), and your cough or sore throat symptoms have improved (whichever is longer).
- Avoid touching your face, especially eyes, nose, and mouth, with unwashed hands
- Disinfect "high touch" surfaces frequently with products that have been E.P.A approved.
 - Includes: Door handles, sinks, guest books, pens, phones, etc.
 - Click [here](#) for the CDC's cleaning and disinfecting guidelines
 - Click [here](#) for examples of EPA approved products

Preventative Actions Specific to Funeral Homes

A funeral or visitation service can be held for a person who has died of COVID-19 with certain restrictions. Consistent with the recommendations from the Illinois Funeral Directors Association (IFDA) Board of Directors, Funeral Home Directors should follow the CDC guidelines on gatherings, including those directly related to any funerals, visitations, or graveside services.

All gatherings of ten (10) or more should be canceled, and/or only conducted with a limit of ten (10) or less people. Viewings should only be conducted on bodies that have been embalmed and should only be permissive with ten (10) or less people. Graveside services should be private and conducted with ten (10) or less people.

Decedents with COVID-19 can be buried or cremated but check for any additional state or local requirements that may dictate the handling and disposition of the remains of individuals who have died of certain infectious diseases.

People should consider not touching the body of someone who has died of COVID-19. Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions are at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness.

There may be less of a chance of the virus spreading from certain types of touching, such as holding the hand or hugging after the body has been prepared for viewing. Other activities, such as kissing, washing, and shrouding should be avoided before, during, and after the body has been prepared, if possible.

If washing the body or shrouding are important religious or cultural practices, families are encouraged to work with their community 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. If splashing of fluids is expected, additional personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required (such as disposable gown, faceshield or goggles and facemask).



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Preventative Actions for Funeral Home Workers Handling Decedents

Funeral home workers should follow their routine infection prevention and control precautions when handling a decedent who died of COVID-19. If it is necessary to transfer a body to a bag, follow [Standard Precautions](#), including additional personal protective equipment (PPE) if splashing of fluids is expected. For transporting a body after the body has been bagged, disinfect the outside of the bag with a product with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims

(https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf) expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). Wear disposable nitrile gloves when handling the body bag.

Embalming can be conducted. During embalming, follow Standard Precautions including the use of additional PPE if splashing is expected (e.g. disposable gown, faceshield or goggles and facemask).

Wear appropriate respiratory protection if any procedures will generate aerosols or if required for chemicals used in accordance with the manufacturer's label. Wear heavy-duty gloves over nitrile disposable gloves if there is a risk of cuts, puncture wounds, or other injuries that break the skin. Additional information on how to safely conduct aerosol-generating procedures is in the [CDC's Postmortem Guidance](#).

Cleaning should be conducted in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Products with EPA-approved emergency viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

After cleaning and removal of PPE, perform [hand hygiene](#) by washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not available. Soap and water should be used if the hands are visibly soiled.

Contact us if you have questions or concerns:



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