



HOW CORONAVIRUS WILL AFFECT FUNERALS

As you will be aware, we are currently in the midst of a coronavirus epidemic. As a responsible business and member of your community, we are thinking of possible impacts on funerals already organized and those yet to be planned in the coming weeks and months.

We would like to provide reassurance that our commitment to caring for bereaved people and their loved ones will remain steadfast throughout this period of uncertainty and disruption.

In our efforts to protect families and everyone involved in arranging funerals, we are considering a range of infection control options in line with ongoing advice given by The Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG), which is regularly liaising with government on the response to COVID-19, which comprises the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF); Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries (APCC), Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA); Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers' Association (FFMA); Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM); The Cremation Society; and the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD).

We are also working with partners, such as local crematoria and burial grounds, to ensure we comply with their coronavirus procedures.

As such, if we find ourselves in a position of increased risk to health, and at risk of furthering the spread of coronavirus we may need to take the following actions:

- Funeral arrangements being made entirely over the phone with limited face-to-face contact. The completion of forms will be by a visit to a controlled area of our office or a brief external home visit. We would not be able to conduct arrangements at clients' homes or other venues.
- The Church of England has suspended public assemblies including funerals and gatherings at other places of worship could be also be cancelled. In such circumstances, we would be able to arrange a memorial or thanksgiving service at a church or another venue at a later date, when the risk has passed.

- Services at any venue could be cancelled. This could result in funeral services at crematoria being 'live-streamed' via the internet. We would provide advice aimed at ensuring everyone who needs to view the service is able to do so. Our staff may also be required to wait outside any chapel or building during services, whilst remaining on hand to offer assistance in line with official guidance.
- Service times at crematoria could be adjusted and/or reduced to allow for increased demand for services.
- Limousine travel is not permitted. The family of the deceased and mourners must make their own way to the place of the funeral.
- Staff sharing. In the event of widespread staff illness, we may have to arrange with other local family-run and well-respected funeral directors to share personnel if required. Rest assured you will still see the same high standards of care and professionalism from all of our partner organizations.
- Viewings. We will protect our clients and staff by restricting viewings. However, we will do our best to enable clients to sit with the coffin during this period.
- We are not able to conduct any receptions of coffins into church or home during this period.
- Family members will not be permitted to take part in carrying coffins.
- The funeral director and staff would not remain in a chapel or other venue during the service. They will remain close by, outside, ready to assist you when required.
- Pre and post-funeral gatherings in public places are not permitted.
- In the case of coronavirus related deaths, we may have to arrange a prompt funeral to prevent unnecessary storage and handling of the deceased.
- We will not be offering hygienic treatment (embalming) during this period.
- Outside organizations will impose rules and restrictions – we will adapt our working practices to follow these.
- Attendance at crematoria services is limited to members of the immediate family who are not in any of the high risk categories and are not self-isolating. The immediate family being:
 - ❖ Spouse/Partner
 - ❖ Parents/Carers
 - ❖ Brothers/Sisters
 - ❖ Children (and partners)
- Mourners will not be permitted to approach or touch the coffin on the catafalque (platform) and the curtains will close when the service is concluded.
- Donations will not be collected at any funeral gathering. Contributions can be made electronically or by payment card by prior arrangement.

We ask that all visitors to our office are aware of the following:

- Our main reception door will be regularly disinfected. We regularly clean the doorbell / handles and keep an eye out for visitors approaching the door.
- We have hand sanitizer available on entry into our offices – please help us to keep you safe by using it. Our staff sometimes find that a client will want to give them a kiss or hug to say thank you for supporting them through a difficult time. We politely ask that you refrain from doing this during this period.

Thank you for your understanding.



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