

COVID-19 RESPONSE – FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT GUIDELINES

Burial Transit Permits

641-97.12(5) A burial-transit permit shall not be issued to a person other than a licensed funeral director if the death or fetal death was caused by a suspected or known communicable disease as defined by Iowa Code section 139A.2.

Funeral Director Duties

645-100.2(3) – CDC universal precautions and OSHA standards. The funeral director shall observe current guidelines of universal precautions as prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as well as Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

Method of disposition and preparation of bodies

- At this time, the CDC states that decedents with COVID-19 may be buried or cremated according to the family's preference. See below for Iowa specific guidance.
- At this time, CDC guidelines state 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 died of COVID-19. Therefore, there should not be any need to limit the number of attendees. The only exception would be federal, state or local restrictions on public gathering. See below for Iowa specific guidance.

Handling COVID-19 bodies in Iowa

- In Iowa, if the decedent tested positive to COVID-19, the body must be transported in a body bag properly disinfected and ensure that standard precautions and CDC recommendations are being followed.
- Embalming is not required if the decedent was COVID-19 positive and will be directly buried, however, the body must be transported in a body bag properly disinfected or a sealed plain wood casket.
- Open casket viewing should be prohibited if the decedent was COVID-19 positive at time of death.

Iowa Proclamation requirements:

Social, community, spiritual, religious, recreational, leisure and sporting gatherings and events of more than 10 people are hereby prohibited at all locations and venues, including but not limited to parades, festivals, conventions and fundraisers until 11:50 p.m. on April 30, 2020. This does include funeral and visitation services.

Additional Resources

[Standard Precautions](#)

[COVID-19 and Funerals \(CDC\)](#)

[What Healthcare Professionals Should Know \(CDC\)](#)

[COVID-19 \(CDC\)](#)

[List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(EPA\)](#)

[NFDA](#)

Contact Information

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