



Guidance for Funeral Homes and Funeral Directors

Updated January 7, 2021

Governor Raimondo and the Director of Health, Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, include calling hours, wakes, funerals (inside and outside), graveside services, and burials as settings that must comply with current COVID-19 Executive Orders and guidance's. Funeral directors should recommend that end-of-life services be scheduled for a later time so any ceremonies or memorials that take place are as safe as possible.

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) recommends that funeral home staff should continue to follow universal precautions for all decedent care as COVID status may be unknown at the time of death.

Calling hours/Wakes

- Calling hours and wakes are not allowed at funeral homes.
- Final viewings are for immediate family members only (spouse, parents, siblings, children, grandparents) and must occur one household at a time.

Funeral/Memorial Services/Celebrations of Life

- Funerals, memorial services, and celebrations of life are not allowed at funeral homes
- Funerals, memorial services, and celebration of life ceremonies are allowed to take place at a house of worship. Volume is limited to 25% of standard capacity, with a maximum of 125 people. People must be able to maintain physical distance when seated - i.e., minimum of six feet of physical distance between groups of people from different households. All people must stay six feet away from each other and wear masks. Anyone who is sick or has symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend.
- Auxiliary staff/officiants, including pall bearers, clergy, funeral director, honor guards, bag piper, bugler, and organist are included in the capacity limit. Individuals from out of state can attend the funeral and must comply with Rhode Island's guidance for residents and visitors.

Services Held Outside or at Graveside

- No more than 15 people can attend an outdoor gravesite service.
- All people must stay six feet away from each other and wear a mask. Anyone who is sick or has symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend.
- Auxiliary staff/officiants, including pall bearers, clergy, funeral director, honor guards, bag piper, bugler, and organist are not included in the capacity limit; however, auxiliary staff/officiants must remain 12 feet away from mourners and wear a cloth face covering that covers their mouth and nose. Pall bearers should return to their vehicles once the casket is positioned at the gravesite unless they are part of the 15 funeral attendees.
- American flags that are draped over the casket can be folded and given to the funeral director after the attendees have returned to their cars. The funeral director will present the flag to the family at a later time.
- Individuals from out of state can attend the funeral and must comply with Rhode Island's guidance for residents and visitors.