



Recommendations for Hmong Funerals during COVID-19

6/30/2021

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) prepared these recommendations with Hmong Community Leaders and Cultural and Spiritual Leaders. The guidance is both for business owners of funeral homes and for the Hmong community about how to carry out funerals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Venues hosting planned services and other gatherings are encouraged to follow the guidance in this document and other documents referenced in this document as they apply to specific activities.

Recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. These droplets and particles can be breathed in by other people; land in their eyes, nose, or mouth; or land on surfaces that people touch. The risk of COVID-19 transmission increases when people gather with other households. Several key strategies can reduce the risk of getting sick or transmitting COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated. Vaccination is one of the best things you can do to prevent getting or spreading COVID-19. Visit [COVID-19 Vaccine \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html).
- Wear a face covering when recommended by MDH or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - There is no longer a statewide requirement to wear face coverings in most settings. However, other federal, state, and/or local laws may require face coverings in some settings, and businesses may set their own requirements.
 - For more information about face covering recommendations, refer to [Recommendations for Wearing Masks \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html).
- If you are not vaccinated:
 - Keep at least 6 feet of physical distance from other households and follow the face covering recommendations in the above MDH resources.
- Vaccinated or not vaccinated, MDH strongly recommends that everyone:
 - Wash their hands often.
 - Follow guidance on staying home (quarantine) if you were exposed to someone who has COVID-19. People who are fully vaccinated may not need to quarantine in many situations. Refer to [Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf) for more details.
 - Stay home if they are sick. Visit [If You Are Sick: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).
 - Follow testing recommendations for when they travel, have COVID-19 symptoms, or are exposed to COVID-19. Visit [COVID-19 Testing \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) for information about who should get tested and how to get a test.
 - Employers must provide reasonable accommodations as required under existing federal and state law.

Key recommendations for funerals

- Speak with the funeral establishment or venue hosting the service or ceremony to ensure you understand the establishment's recommended or required COVID-19 strategies. Communicate these strategies in advance to others attending the funeral where possible.
- Stay home if you or anyone in your household are sick or have tested positive for COVID-19. It is also important to stay home if you are waiting for your COVID-19 test results or are staying at home and away from others (in isolation or quarantine) due to a positive test or close contact with someone who had COVID-19.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- If offering food, consider adapting safe practices such as avoid serving food buffet style and other options from CDC. Refer to [CDC: Hosting gatherings or cook-outs \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/personal-social-activities.html#gatherings\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/personal-social-activities.html#gatherings) and [CDC: Large Gatherings \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/large-gatherings.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/large-gatherings.html).
- Follow the [CDC: Considerations for Communities of Faith \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html) and the [CDC: Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html).
- Music is an integral part of many faith-based services and funerals. Singing and instrumental music produced by woodwind or brass instruments are higher-risk activities for spreading COVID-19 due to a higher-than-normal release of respiratory droplets into the air. If choosing to provide live music of any kind, consider the recommendations for [Recommendations for Music Activities and Performances During COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/musicguide.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/musicguide.pdf).

Recommended hours of services

For services involving multiple participants who have not been fully vaccinated, or when participant vaccination status is unknown, MDH recommends that services be limited in time (for example, no more than 10-12 hours). There is no specific "safe" amount of time for a funeral service, but based on what we know, longer interactions between people increase the risk of transmitting the virus. Because the virus can linger in the air, it is important for people to keep their time in the shared space as short as possible. Minimizing the number of people and the time of interaction can lower the risk during the pandemic.

Cultural religious practices

The Hmong 18 Council and other cultural leaders in the Hmong community advise the following minimum cultural practices needed to complete a Hmong funeral.

Basic guidelines for traditional Hmong funeral

Txheej txheem kev nruam sim (Ntees ploj tuag)

The traditional Hmong funeral can be conducted in as short a time as a day-long service. The minimum proceedings that should be conducted are as follows:

Hais txog lub ntees tuag uas siv ib hnub ua xwb los yeej tau lawm. Yam uas yuav tsum tau ua xwb xwb li ces muaj raws li nram qab no:

<i>English</i>	<i>Hmong</i>
1. Spiritual Guide's song to guide the Decedent's spirit back to the Ancestors.	1. Taws kev rau tus neeg nruam sim.
2. Reed pipes (qeej) song to acknowledge and confirm the death of the Decedent and prepare the Decedent for the Journey to the Ancestors.	2. Zaj qeej tu siav rau tus neeg nruam sim. Yuav tsum tshuab tab xwb, tsis txhob tshuab txooj.
3. Reed pipes (qeej) song to hoist the Decedent onto his/her Winged Steed and to give him/her their offerings to take with them on their Journey to the Ancestors.	3. Zaj qeej tsa nees. Cob tu npua tsa nees rau tus neeg nruam sim coj mus ua noob.
4. Reed pipes (qeej) song to accompany the serving of breakfast, lunch, and dinner.	4. Qeej tshais, qeej su, thiab qeej hmos.
5. Reed pipes (qeej) song offering additional spiritual live stocks, if any.	5. Yog muaj tsiaj cob hauv qhua ces tshuab qeej cob tsiaj, yog tsis muaj ces tsis tshuab.
6. Reed pipes (qeej) song offering money to the Decedent from Family members.	6. Zaj qeej hlawv ntawv tub ki thiab hauv qhua rau tus neeg nruam sim.
7. Reed pipes (qeej) song signifying the departure from the funeral home to the final resting place of the Decedent.	7. Zaj qeej sawv kev xa tus neeg nruam sim mus rau nws lub vaj lub tsev tshiab.

**Reed pipes (qeej) songs are accompanied by Drummers*

Funeral proceeding with invited guests of honor and blessing ceremony

Lub ntees nruam sim muaj hauv qhua thiab hais xim

<i>English</i>	<i>Hmong</i>
1. As for the invited honor guests, there is no need for the 2 chickens and the pig. What are needed are 1 bundle of cutout joss paper, 1 bottle of alcoholic beverage, 1 bag of rice and a piece of meat along with the so-called sunshine money.	1. Hais txog kev ua hauv qhua tsis txhob npaj 2 tug qaib thiab tus npua lawm. Qhov yuav tau npaj yog 1 ntshuas ntawv, 1 poom cawv, 1 diav mov thiab 1 ntshiv nqaij coj tuaj ua kev cai nrog rau qhov nyiaj tshav ntuj.
2. There's no need to set up the table for distributing the meat brought by the invited guests of honor.	2. Tsis muaj lub rooj faib hauv qhua su lawm.
3. If the family of the deceased wished to have the blessing ceremony, then just set up the table for that only and no need to set up one for the invited honor guests and relatives of the deceased. Once the table for the blessing ceremony is set, then the invited guests of honor like the cuab tsav (distinguished leader of the family's), muam phauj (paternal grand aunt) and txiv dab laug (maternal uncle) will turn facing the deceased (casket) and make remarks, concluding that all of the wrong doing committed by the deceased has been resolved. The deceased no longer bears any blames and that the deceased is released cleared of any blames and can leave the physical self. Once completed, the invited guests of honor will turn to give a few words of blessing for the family of the deceased. Once that is completed, then the master of ceremony will start the main blessing ceremony.	3. Yog tus uas tsev neeg yuav kom hais xim xwb no ces muab lub rooj xim xwb, tsis muaj rooj rau kev neej kev tsav zaum. Yog thaum rub tau lub rooj hais xim lawm ces thov cov hauv qhua xws li cuab tsav, muam phauj, thiab txiv dab laug los hais lus rau tus neeg nruam sim tias nws tus plaub xo xaiv ncej tug muab hais tiav lawm. Nws tsis muaj plaub ntug lawm nws mus dawb mus huv. Ces tig muab ob peb lo lus koob lus hmoov hais rau tsev xyom cuab tas ces tso rau txiv coj xai lawm xwb.

These are the guidelines if it is limited to just a one-day service. If more days are used, then there will be more ceremonies than these.

Cov Txheej Txheem tsuas muaj li no yog hais tias siv ib hnub ua xwb. Yog siv ob hnub ces nws kuj muaj ntau dua no.

Personnel recommendations

Thawj lwm tub ncig

<i>English</i>	<i>Hmong</i>
1. Family Representative; one	1. Ib tug Thawj Xyom Cuab
2. Funeral Service Managers; two	2. Ob tug Kav Xwm
3. Reed pipes (qeej) and Drum (Nruag) Players; three	3. Peb tug Txiv Qeej & Txiv Nruag
4. Spiritual Guide (To lead the spirit back to the Ancestors); one	4. Ib tug Txiv Taw Kev.
5. Family Spiritual Leader; one	5. Ib tug Txiv Cuab Tsav.

For more information, call the MDH COVID-19 Public Hotline at 1-833-431-2053.



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Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.