

Mortuary Science Licensing and Practice Standards Modifications and Waivers

HEALTH REGULATION DIVISION, MORTUARY SCIENCE

ATTENTION

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Health Regulation Division (HRD) is temporarily modifying certain requirements related to licensing and standards for state-licensed morticians, interns, funeral establishments, crematories, and alkaline hydrolysis facilities.

We are modifying the licensing standards to support the funeral industry during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. With the projected increase in deaths due to COVID-19, coupled with the reduction in the number of practicing morticians, these waivers are needed to assure funeral providers have the professional capacity to make removals, store and prepare decedents with safety and respect, and assist families in making decisions about final arrangements for their loved ones. The waivers will help the industry to quickly hire interns and licensed, trained mortuary science practitioners; utilize trained, unlicensed personnel or to hire medical responders, if needed, in making removals; and allow funeral providers additional time to submit their renewal.

Requirements Being Modified

[Emergency Executive Order 20-32 \(PDF\)](https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-32.pdf) (<https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-32.pdf>) issued on April 8, 2020, allows the Commissioner of Health to temporarily delay, waive, or modify certain requirements so that providers can take necessary action to protect Minnesotans.

The following Minnesota Statutes related to licensing and practice standards for morticians, interns, funeral establishments, crematories, and alkaline hydrolysis facilities are now modified: Minnesota Statutes, chapter 149A, specifically:

- section 149A.01, subd. 2
- section 149A.01, subd. 2(1)
- section 149A.20, subd. 5 and 6
- section 149A.30
- section 149A.40, subd. 11
- section 149A.51, subd. 3
- section 149A.53, subd. 3
- section 149A.55, subd. 3
- section 149A.70, subd. 6 and
- section 149A.90, subd. 2

What HRD is Doing Differently

During the COVID-19 peacetime emergency order and for 60 days after termination of the order, MDH will:

- Develop an application and issue a temporary, COVID-19 peacetime emergency license and authorization to morticians licensed in good standing from other states, and to morticians with emeritus status who wish to provide mortuary services.
- Issue a registration card to interns before they pass the state and national exam, and allow interns to submit case reports on COVID-19 duties, including hours related to cremation, assistance with removals and storage.
- Issue a license to morticians who apply by reciprocity before they pass the state exam.
- Process funeral establishment and crematory licenses after expiration of the peacetime emergency and waive late fees.
- Allow supervising morticians the option of using unlicensed, trained employees to independently remove decedents from the place of death or to hire emergency responders, as needed, if dealing with an increase in death rates.

Implementation Guidance

MDH issues the following guidance to assure safety during COVID-19 related restrictions:

- Interns and morticians licensed by reciprocity will need to schedule and pass the state exam after the COVID-19 peacetime emergency is terminated.
- Interns need to make sure they take the national exam once it is offered by Pearson Vue, and pass the exam within 60 days after the peacetime emergency expires.
- Morticians with a temporary license must apply and receive an authorization letter from MDH before providing licensed mortuary services.
- Supervising morticians and funeral providers must assure unlicensed employees are fully trained in proper removal techniques and to prevent transmission of disease before being allowed to independently remove and transport decedents.

You must:

- Comply with all documentation and practice standards in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 149A unless a provision is waived or modified by this or subsequent orders by MDH or the Governor.

Timeframe

The modifications will be in effect during COVID-19 emergency orders and for 60 days after termination of the emergency peacetime orders.

Questions?

Contact the Mortuary Science Program at health.mortsci@state.mn.us or 651-201-3829.

EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE ORDER HEALTH REGULATION DIVISION PROVISION:
MORTUARY SCIENCE LICENSING AND PRACTICE STANDARDS

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4101.