

# COVID-19 Planning

## Recommendations for Funeral Services and Ceremonies

6/30/2021

This guidance offers recommendations to prevent COVID-19 transmission for those involved in funeral services and ceremonies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) regulates and enforces Minnesota Statute 149A: Funeral Industry Law, which covers funeral homes, crematories, and alkaline hydrolysis facilities, and extends to interns, morticians, and funeral directors. MDH offers information and resources to help people make informed decisions about the final disposition of their loved ones and about how to file a complaint.

The following summary for license holders and the families they serve is specific to mortuary science questions MDH has received.

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## 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 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, visit [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. Visit [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.

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## ▪ Key recommendations for funerals

- Speak with the funeral establishment or venue hosting the service or ceremony to ensure you understand the establishment's recommended COVID-19 mitigation 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 the virus.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Follow the [CDC COVID-19 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 [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).
- Encourage high-risk people not to attend funerals in person, especially if they have not been fully vaccinated. Use technology to allow people who are more vulnerable to attend remotely.

## More information

- [Guidance for Hmong Funerals during COVID-19](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hmongfuneral.pdf)  
([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hmongfuneral.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hmongfuneral.pdf))
- [Businesses and Employers: COVID-19](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html)  
([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html))



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