

Memo



The Family Funeral Service®

To: All Staff
From: NLR
Cc: MLR, JLR, PDC
Date: 11/09/2020
Re: COVID-19 Coronavirus – Addendum to Guidance

Guidance for Funeral Related Procedures

First Calls

For both private and HM Coroner removals it is still important that the Funeral Director taking the first call establishes whether:

1. The deceased was known to have or suspected of having COVID-19
2. Any member of the household is known to have or suspected to have COVID-19 or is requested or has been instructed to self-isolate.

In either of the above situations only one member of the household should meet with our call staff on arrival at the home, that person should wear a face covering, and that person should leave the room as soon as the identification and jewellery details are noted.

When the removal is from a care, residential or nursing home the Funeral Director taking the first call must explain to the representative of the home that due to the current COVID-19 situation and higher risk to their resident we are offering three options at the time of the removal.

1. The removal is done as usual by two of our staff wearing gloves, aprons and face masks.
2. The removal is done predominantly by staff within the home with just one of our team assisting, again in the above PPE.
3. The staff within the home move the deceased to the ambulance using our equipment where our team will take over.

The call team must be made aware of the option selected before their arrival at the home.

Removals

At the location of the Removal you must:

- Socially distance from the family at all times and from your call partner as much as practical.
- Use PPE appropriate to the situation.
- Avoid touching surfaces wherever possible.
- If there is a risk that either the deceased or a member of the household may have COVID-19 then only one member of the household should meet with one member of our team, that person should wear a face cover and they should leave the room once the jewellery and identity checks have been performed. At this stage the second member of our team can enter the household.
- Ensure that all the standard procedures in relation to identify, jewellery, clothing, personal effects, etc are still adhered to.
- **Place a cone shaped mask or cover over the mouth and nose of every deceased person** to prevent air being expelled from the lungs on moving.
- Place two identity tags onto the deceased. If there is a risk that the deceased may have COVID-19 then **red tags** should be used to immediately highlight this risk to other staff members.
- Wrap the deceased, including their face, in either:
 - the sheet from the place of removal (seeking the families permission beforehand)
 - one of our disposable sheets,
 - or place them in a body bag, ensuring the face is properly covered. (When a body bag is used a third **red** tag must be fully completed and attached to the closure to ensure that all identity checks can be safely made throughout the rest of the funeral process.
- Whenever possible avoid lifting by the wrists and try to lift by the shoulders to minimise the amount of air being expelled from the lungs.
- After the deceased is placed in the ambulance, and with gloves still on, use a sanitiser wipe to clean any parts of the ambulance and body wrapping you have touched, then place the wipe in the bio-hazard waste bag, remove your gloves and put them in the same bag.
- Apply hand sanitiser at the rear of the ambulance.
- Without entering back into the property return to say your usual goodbye to those present. Again do not shake hands.

Decision on where to transfer to

- **AWL removal** - take to the relevant office
- **Derby Coroners removal** – take to the Royal Derby Hospital
- **North Derby Coroners removal** – take to Chesterfield Royal Infirmary (or nearest funeral home if police allow).
- **Nottingham Coroners removal** – take to the QMC Mortuary.

On arrival at the Mortuary

When delivering a deceased person who **may have COVID-19** you must:

- Ensure that all the standard procedures in relation to identify, jewellery, clothing, personal effects, etc. are still adhered to.
- Ensure that the mortuary register is complete, this **must** include in bold capital letters that the deceased person may have COVID-19.
- Ensure you are wearing gloves.
- Transfer the deceased to the cold room / mortuary tray.
- Disinfect your gloves
- Disinfect any manual handling aids and pens used.
- Disinfect the stretcher used for the transfer.
- Remove gloves and place in a clinical waste bag.

If there has been any spillage then this must be thoroughly cleaned.

Removals from a Hospital

If the deceased is known to have COVID-19 they should already be placed in a body bag with full identity details on the outside, but if not a red identity tag must be completed and fitted to the closure of the bag. Gloves must also be worn throughout.

Face Masks

- **Deceased** – A cone shaped face mask **must** be positioned over the mouth and nose of every deceased prior to moving except when released to us by a hospital, other funeral director or similar in a body bag.
- **Staff, when COVID-19 is known or suspected** – the guidance recommends that IIR surgical (flat) face masks are used when moving a known or suspected COVID-19 deceased, however should you prefer to wear these to perform other specific duties then you may do so and each ambulance has a supply.
- **Nursing, Residential and Care Homes** - on every occasion each member of staff must now wear a face covering when entering one of these homes, this is not for our protection but to prevent the possibility of us unknowingly introducing the virus into a home.
- **Face coverings** – These are now mandatory for:
 - All visitors to our branches including the florists and stonemasons.
 - All attendees at an indoor funeral service

These are not the same as face masks which should only be used where they are deemed as necessary PPE for the task being undertaken. Below is a link to the government website giving advice on the use of face coverings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Arranging Funerals

All of our branches are open and clients are now welcome to attend to make funeral arrangements in person provided social distancing measures are adhered to such as staying 2 meters apart, sitting side by side rather than face to face, washing / sanitising hands and not touching faces. Face coverings must now be worn by all visitors to any of our offices. **Clients must also complete either a hard copy or online test and trace form.**

Funeral arrangements can now also be made in a client's home but prior to the appointment the funeral director should speak with the family and undertake a risk assessment to ensure that they are able to socially distance in the home and to take any PPE required to make the arrangement meeting safe.

Should a client prefer to they are still able to make all the arrangements over the telephone and via e-mail. Electronic documents can be forms completed online, scans or photographs and a form is considered to be signed as long as it is sent from the email address of the person who would normally sign. Below is the procedure to follow if a client prefers not to attend in person.

1. Ensure the family have seen a brochure.
2. Advise that we can make all the arrangements on the telephone and via e-mail without the need to meet face to face.
3. Advise families that the government guidance is that only a maximum of 30 family and close friends may attend the funeral and that many cemeteries and crematoria have their own regulations which may further limit the number of mourners.
4. Complete;
 - a. All the forms for burial or cremation as you would normally with the exception of Cremation Form 1.
 - b. Complete the whole of Form 1, a question at a time, whilst discussing with the applicant and save to an appropriate file in your branch folders. An editable version of Form 1 is saved on the server Public / AWL Forms / Cremation Forms / Cremation Form 1 Electronic. It is important that in question 8 the print your full name box reads **"name of client – see covering e-mail as signature"**
 - c. All AWL forms.
5. Explain to the client that you will
 - a. scan and forward all the forms in 6 a and c above to them to check and that you would like an e-mail reply confirming that they are in accordance with their instructions.
 - b. Forward the electronic version of Cremation Form 1 (where applicable) together with the e-mail address of the Crematorium and that the client **MUST** forward that form the crematorium, copying you as the Funeral Director in. This is because the e-mail from the client to the Crematorium replaces the need for them to sign the declaration at the end. **The body of the e-mail must also state "Please accept this e-mail from me as the applicant for cremation in place of my signature on the attached form and as confirmation that the answers contained therein are my own"**

- c. Green forms – these are now being e-mailed by the registrars to the funeral director and burial or cremation authority.
6. At this stage we in effect have a contract with the funeral arranger and the Crematorium has an application so the funeral can go ahead without us meeting face to face with the family.

Arranging without e-mail – If a client does not have e-mail access then our forms can be completed over the telephone, agreed verbally, marked as agreed over the telephone as no e-mail access and a copy sent in the post.

With regard to Cremation Form 1 we can put in part 4, question 1, **NO** and detail below that ***“we are making the application as the funeral director on behalf of (and state who). We have discussed every question on the phone with them but they are unable to complete in person due to Coronavirus”*** We have been advised by the MoJ that whenever possible the preferred course would be electronic transmission but if a crematorium or Medical Referee refused to accept a form completed on this basis they would have to give good reason for so refusing.

Funeral Directors Services

1. **Viewing** – Families wishing to view in the Chapel of Rest should do so by appointment and those attending at any one time limited should be limited to those living in the same household. Families may also now view those known or thought to have COVID-19 provided **six days** have passed between the date of death and date of viewing. In these situations either a gown or “own clothes as worn” must be selected.

Embalming & Preparation – No embalming will be performed on any deceased with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, however when viewing is requested preparation, including dressing in a gown when required, will be carried out, but this must be a minimum of four days after death.

The experienced staff in the mortuary are still able to remove pacemakers safely if necessary.

Face masks on bodies – These will remain in place on all bodies until they are finally positioned in their coffin and will then be removed for any deceased who are going to be viewed.

2. **Flowers** – City Flowers are now fully re-open and supplying all our tributes. Most of our range is now available but there may be some restrictions due to availability at the flower market.
3. **Passenger transport** – There are now several options available to clients;

Rolls-Royce Phantom VII Limousines – We have fitted screens to all of our Phantom VII Limousines which wrap around the driver and still allow

four passengers to travel in the vehicle. To adhere to government guidance these four passengers must be from the same household.

Rolls-Royce Phantom VI Limousines – these vehicles already have screens fitted and the number of passengers in each is limited to five. Again all passengers must be from the same household.

Mercedes V-Class – this vehicle can accommodate up to six passengers from the same household, including one normal sized wheelchair when required.

Route master Bus - this can be used for several households as it is large enough to socially distance while travelling on it.

The following safety measures should be implemented when any passenger vehicle is used.

- a. The windows should be kept open when practicable for good ventilation
- b. All handles, hand rests, screens and seat backs, should be cleaned between each set of passengers.
- c. The handle, steering wheel, controls and screen should be clean between drivers.
- d. All occupants must wash their hands or use hand gel at the end of the journey.
- e. Any coughs or sneezes should be caught in as tissue or the crook of the elbow.
- f. Face coverings may also be used by passengers if wanted.

4. **Staff transport** – Most of our fleet now have screens fitted to enable two members of staff to travel together. This includes Hearses and Ambulances. Any vehicle without a screen remain strictly for the driver only.

Cleaning – Each vehicle has been issued with a cleaning box which must be used each time the occupants change. Each box has step by step cleaning instructions displayed in the lid.

5. **Funeral Processions** – The route taken should be discussed with the family in advance of the funeral as the current restriction on numbers allowed to attend the service mean that some families like the cortege to pass by specific locations on the way to the funeral so neighbours or relatives can pay their respects. A few additional minutes could also be taken at the home address prior to departing so that neighbours can pay their respects at this time.
6. **Services** – These are currently restricted by government guidance to a maximum of 30 family and close friends in total. Many crematoria have issued their own guidance on this so please refer on a case by case basis so families are aware. These are changing frequently due to local adjustments in lockdown restrictions so it is important to keep checking the most up to date information released by each venue. While numbers are

restricted you should not publicly advertise the date and time of the funeral to reduce the risk of other, well-meaning mourners arriving unexpectedly.

Those in at risk groups or those self-isolating but without any symptoms are now permitted to attend a funeral service provided appropriate measures are put in place to protect them as well as others in attendance. Likewise those who have travelled from abroad and are isolating for 14 days as a result are permitted to break this isolation to attend a funeral service provided they do not have any symptoms.

Social distancing at the service - The front mourners must be a minimum of 2 metres from the Officiant and no physical contact is allowed such as hand shaking, hugging, kissing, touching the coffin at the end of the service, etc.

On arrival at the service the Funeral Director should establish the household groups present and enter the venue to arrange the seating appropriately before inviting the mourners in.

Face coverings – these are now mandatory for all mourners at an indoor funeral service. Those giving a eulogy or reading are permitted to remove their covering whilst addressing the congregation. Clients **must** be made aware of this as part of the pre-funeral check.

- 7. Staff at the service** - we have now returned to our usual compliment of staff at each service.

Face coverings – All staff are now required to wear a face covering when they are the conductor or a bearer at an indoor funeral service.

Burials – The coffin will now be lowered at the start of the service so that the bearers and cemetery staff can distance themselves from the mourners and each other more quickly. An instruction to this effect has been included in the Ministers Confirmation e-mail so that they are aware beforehand, please ensure this is highlighted when relevant, and deleted when not.

- 8. Bearers** – We have returned to shoulder bearing coffins wherever practicable. The Crematorium should have supplies of hand sanitisers and all bearers, regardless of whether they are family or A W Lymn, should use this both before and after moving the coffin. Once the coffin has been positioned at the front of the service the bearers are to step away from the coffin before bowing to it and leaving the room. Should a Funeral Director experience resistance from a particular venue then they must do as the venue asks for that particular funeral but report the incident to the Management so that this can be discussed.

Family Bearers – Family bearers are also now allowed.

- 9. Donations** – These should be online whenever possible or by post but as funerals are now only being attended by immediate family it is assumed

that there will be very few donations on the day. The Funeral Director should have envelopes available just in case anyone requests one.

- 10. Listing and Ushers** – As numbers allowed to attend a funeral are very restricted at the moment listing is not required and ushers will not be attending.
- 11. Test and Trace** – It is the responsibility of the main mourner to keep a record of those who attend a service for a period of 21 days following the service in case this is required for test and trace. This should be mentioned to the family at the time of making the arrangements.
- 12. Funeral Guide** – It is **very important** that we continue to promote funeral guide to give people the opportunity to notify others of the death and allow them to interact with the family, however the specific details of the funeral must remain confidential. Instructions on how to do this have already been circulated.
- 13. Newspaper notices** – Again these can still carry on where publishing, and in the case of the Nottingham Post and Derby Telegraph that will of course generate another web announcement, but again **the details must remain confidential**
- 14. Orders of Service** – Most locations have now removed their hymn books, however we can still provide orders of service as these are handed out and taken away. Alternatively single use hymn sheets can be printed and disposed of after the service.
- 15. Music & Visual Tributes** – These are still available at many Crematoria but please check the specific details with them at the time of booking.
- 16. Webcasting** – many crematoria are offering discounted rates for live streaming the service so that those who are no longer permitted to attend can still feel a part of the service.
- 17. Doves** – We can still provide these at funerals but the new system will be either that the family open the cage and take them out individually and release them or the funeral director opens the cage and simply lets them fly.
- 18. Interments and Scattering of Ashes** – These services are allowed to take place but from Monday 14th September a maximum of six people will be allowed to attend.
- 19. Pre and Post Funeral Receptions** – from Monday 14th September a maximum of six people are allowed to attend these in a private home. In a public place such as a bar or restaurant more than six can attend but they must remain in groups of a maximum of six and not interact with any other group of six while at the venue.

20. Repatriations – Please refer these on a case by case basis to Jackie Lymn Rose.

Families should be advised to contact us immediately if anyone wanting to attend the funeral or complete the forms shows signs of infection. We will then look at the options and will always accommodate a two week delay in the funeral to enable them to attend. It is imperative that anyone who shows signs of being infectious does NOT attend a funeral service.

There has been a lot of guidance issued by the local cemeteries and crematoria and this, along with the guidance from both the Church of England and Catholic Church has been saved on the public server so please refer to this when making any bookings as this changes regularly.

Public / Disbursement Pricing Information / Crematorium Information or Cemetery Information / *select venue* / Information

Other useful information

Branch offices

1. Visitors to all our branches including the florists and stonemasons **MUST** now wear a face covering. All offices should display a window poster advising clients about this before entering.
The guidance does allow those in distress to remove their covering to wipe their eyes or nose and it also allows an exemption to those with certain health conditions.
2. All offices must have a test and trace poster and forms in reception, and all non-staff visitors must complete this if they stay in the branch for more than 15 minutes. A separate staff log must be in each kitchen area.
3. All areas of all offices including toilets should be cleaned each evening with usual cleaning products. Please ensure you have spare cleaning products and replace these locally from your petty cash.
4. Any areas that are touched frequently must be regularly cleaned such as door handles, taps, desks, pens, etc.
5. All paper literature should be removed from public areas. The only exception to this are **our brochures** in the wall mounted displays which are picked up and taken away rather than reused.
6. Flower cards should remain on display for clients to select from but they should be asked to only touch the card they select to avoid unnecessary contact.
7. Tissues must be replaced with white paper towels to avoid cross infection from tissue boxes.
8. Each client toilet must have hand soap and paper towels available. Remember that frequent hand washing for 20 seconds with soap and warm water is the best means of keeping hands clean. All sinks in your office must now have a hand washing posters displayed above it, this includes kitchens, mortuaries and client toilets.
9. Hand sanitiser, gloves and face masks should be in each reception for client use. (As soon as the stock of these arrives they will be sent out you).

10. Clients should be given the option of using either an arranging room with appropriate PPE or larger reception area for the completion of any paperwork or any other face to face meetings.
11. Your own hands must be washed after meeting with any family.
12. Drinks may now be offered to visitors provided they are happy to accept them.
13. If you can find a way to work using fewer rooms then please implement this as it will reduce the areas that need cleaning each day.

Fleet

1. Every vehicle has being allocated a cleaning box with all the necessary products to ensure passenger safety and each box shows instructions on how to clean between uses.
2. The door handles, arm rests, seats, seat backs and screens must be cleaned between each set of passengers.
3. The handle, steering wheel, controls and screen should be clean between drivers.
4. Hand gel must be used by each driver before driving. Gary has a large container of hand gel so when the small bottles run low you must return the bottle to him to refill. Please **do not** throw any of these empty bottles away.

Mess / Kitchen areas

1. It is the responsibility of those using a mess / kitchen area to keep this clean and disinfected. Cleaning products are available from Emma if you require them but they can also be purchased from petty cash.
2. The government guidance of staying 2 meters apart must be adhered to and it is important to respect this for the safety of your colleagues. This includes consideration for where you sit to eat as well as areas were people congregate such as around the fridge or kettle.
3. Breaks should staggered whenever possible to reduce the number of people using one of these areas at any one time.
4. Each branch kitchen and head office mess area should have a **staff** visitor log which must be completed any time a member of staff spends 15 minutes or more in that branch / area.

Homeworking and Vulnerable Staff

In accordance with government guidance all home workers have now returned to their usual place of work. Those on furlough leave are being continually assessed and kept up to date.

About Coronavirus

The symptoms

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A dry cough with no runny nose
- A sore throat
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of sense of taste or smell

However these symptoms do not necessarily mean that you have the illness as they are similar to other more common illnesses such as a cold or the flu.

Any staff showing any symptoms must immediately notify us, isolate at home and book a test for as soon as possible. If the outcome of the test is negative then return to work is permitted when feeling well. If the test is positive then that individual must remain at home for 10 days from the first day of showing symptoms. Any test booking or results confirmation messages should be forwarded to Chloe so that the absence can be treated correctly through payroll.

If a member of someone's household shows any symptoms then all the rest of the household must self-isolate for 14 days. If you are unsure about the rules in regards to this please speak with Chloe.

The link to request a test is:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

The BBC have produced this short video to help with the symptoms and diagnosis.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51934576>

The government has agreed that SSP will be paid for those showing symptoms or self-isolating from the first day of absence to help support them. This does not extend to those self-isolating following a return from a holiday abroad.

Transmission

It is transmitted by either coughs and sneezes or by touching a surface which has previously been touched by an infected person then putting your hands to your eyes, nose or mouth.

Protection

The best way to prevent the spread of the virus is by good personal hygiene.

1. Wash and dry hands frequently with soap and warm water for 20 seconds (only or use a sanitiser if a sink is unavailable).

2. Catch coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues and throw them away immediately after use.
3. If you do not have a tissue use the inside of your elbow rather than hand to catch a cough or sneeze.
4. Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Further information

If you want to find out more the below link takes you to the online government guidance which is being kept up to date as things change.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

Please remember that the biggest risk of infection comes from the living and not the dead as the virus is spread by coughing and sneezing or touching infected surfaces.