



COVID-19 Safety Plan for Funeral Operators

Funerals, Memorial Services, and Wakes

We have developed this guidance to help you create and maintain a safe environment when organising a funeral or wake.

There are some requirements that should be complied with, including the number of people who can attend. This will change with time, so to access up to date information, please visit nsw.gov.au

> GUIDANCE

Consider the actions you could put in place to keep people safe

Considerations	Suggested Solutions
Wellbeing of attendees	
Ensure attendees are aware they should only attend if they are feeling well and do not have any respiratory or COVID-19 symptoms.	Announcements should be made prior to any service commencing by FD/Concierge, outlining Health department guidelines around social gathering, distancing. a simple statement should be drafted (could be a pre-recorded message as mourners arrive.
Consider reminding your guests that it's important they don't attend if they are feeling unwell and encourage them to get tested.	Add to the message signs to look out for and should attendees experience these signs urge them to be tested.
If a guest has symptoms and asks if they should attend, encourage them to see their GP or attend a local COVID clinic.	As above
Discourage people who are from an area of high COVID-19 transmission from attending the funeral in person. If the funeral is in an area of high COVID risk or must have guests from a high COVID-19 area, then limit the gathering or consider having two separate gatherings with people from higher risk areas in only small numbers.	Operators are expected to monitor bookings from high risk areas, and should have a pre-determined statement issued to families, outlining the covid safe restrictions that may apply, challenges facing operators are around transparency of attendees,
Think about ways in which attendees can be involved through a video broadcast or live stream if they can't attend due to illness or travel restrictions or are a vulnerable person and wish to avoid gatherings. Speak to the funeral director about any available options to stream the event.	All operators should embrace a suitable digital platform to broadcast live services over the internet to those people who may be high risk
If you are aware of attendees that are at high-risk of developing COVID-19 complications such as elderly people or people with conditions affecting their immunity, consider offering an online service.	As above
If you will serve alcohol at the wake or service, consider ways to ensure there is responsible use, such as limiting bar tabs or drinks packages. Alcohol can only be consumed by seated patrons.	Operators of condolence centres should consider a waiting service to all attendees for drinks and food, do not allow buffet style or bar service, this is a considerable burden on operators and could increase prices to clients



Physical distancing	
Capacity must not exceed 100 attendees, or one attendee per 4 square metres for a funeral or memorial service. Small venues can have up to 50 attendees (without the 4 square metre rule) provided non-household contacts can maintain 1.5 metres of physical distance, whichever is the lesser.	This is clear and operators should have a specific guideline published to users, FD's/public to ensure that they are operating within the guidelines set out by the health department, failure to could lead to fines or even a risk of liability on your organisation.
Group singing, such as choirs, is high risk and should be avoided. Solo singing and wind instruments can spread COVID-19 if a performer is infected. If these are involved in the funeral or service ensure there are protections in place for attendees, including at least 3 metres distance from performers.	Consider performers in a separate area, ie altar, separate room and live streamed, this would allow families to still experience a dignified service.
Consider seating guests from the same household next to each other, to make it easier to fit everyone safely together. If seating people at tables, ensure these are assigned and that there is minimal mingling between people at different tables. There should be no more than 10 people per table.	This may be a challenge for operators, unless families are transparent with operators this would be challenging for a concierge to determine, consider issuing families with bookings a guest list template that needs to be returned prior to the service so that the operators employee can determine the best seating arrangements
Remind participants of the importance of physical distancing before, during and after the funeral or memorial service. Whilst it is a very natural instinct to hold or hug each other when grieving, this is where COVID-19 can spread easily. Consider alternative ways people could offer condolences that don't involve close contact, such as through a condolence book or recorded messages.	Again, this can be done via a recorded message prior to the gathering.
Hygiene and cleaning	
Consider alternatives to cash donation collections, such as online donations or electronic funds transfers.	Operators can use a suitable digital platform to satisfy donations, consider suspending donations at funerals until after the restrictions are eased, not all attendees will have electronic means.
Think about how other hygiene risks can be minimised, such as not sharing food or cigarettes/e-cigarettes and making sure people can remember which glassware is theirs.	This could prove difficult for operators to police and enforce, again this could be part of a pre-recorded message at condolence lounges as guests arrive. also remember to leave enough time for sanitising of a room and furniture during bookings.
If you would like a condolence book, consider asking guests to bring their own pen, or have a plan to clean any shared pens and the area around the book in-between guests signing. Consider alternatives like a digital condolence book that can be filled in from home.	Consider using a digital platform to achieve this process such as Discover Everafter or Heaven Address, other alternatives could be having someone taking down attendees names but could be time consuming.
Talk to the funeral director about alternatives to books, booklets, or other shared objects used during the service.	Operators should limit the use of items that come into contact with multiple mourners such as condolence books, floral tributes, orders of service and keepsakes such as bookmarks etc.



Record keeping	
Keep a digitised record of guests who attend the funeral and/or wake, including a contact number. Make sure you also keep a record of additional attendees such as caterers. Keep this list for 28 days after the funeral or wake. If there is an attendee at the funeral who gets diagnosed with COVID-19 public health will ask that you provide this record to assist with contact tracing.	If a digitised record of attendees is kept then this would negate the use of condolence books and could be generated to all guests who leave contact details.