



GOVERNMENT OF GUAM

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
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## DPHSS Guidance Memo 2020-33

Re: Minimum Requirements for Funeral Services of Decedents Infected with COVID-19

Outlined below are the requirements for funeral services of decedents who died with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection so to minimize the potential for transmission of the virus to others. These requirements are intended for events held in various settings, including funeral homes, cemetery facilities, and other venues. This document supplements all applicable requirements and restrictions set forth in the Governor's Executive Orders and DPHSS guidance memoranda, including DPHSS Guidance Memoranda 2020-30 and 2020-32.

### A. General Restrictions and Requirements

- Only authorized funeral home staff are permitted to handle the decedent at all times.
- The funeral home must immediately clean and disinfect all outer surfaces of the casket after the placement of the decedent and prior to the viewing of the body.
- Family members are prohibited from touching or making any physical contact with the decedent.
- During viewing, the casket must remain closed at all times; however, the use of a casket with clear covering (i.e., glass or plastic) that permits the viewing of the decedent but prevents contacting the body is authorized.
- Staff of funeral home and attendees are to wear face masks at all times.
  - Funeral homes may adopt U.S. Centers for Disease and Prevention guidelines for face coverings for certain population and situations, including those with certain medical conditions, such as asthma and COPD.
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-cov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html#not-wear>
- All funeral home staff and attendees are to follow everyday preventive measures to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.
- Consider options for modified or new practices that are necessary to protect all of the participants and attendees, such as:
  - Holding a graveside-only service; and
  - When attendance of non-household members is permitted, changing or removing funeral practices that involve close contact or sharing among members of different household, such as sharing a car or limousine ride between the church and the cemetery.

## B. Employee Health and Hygiene

- Funeral staff handling the decedent must adhere to the following precautionary measures:
  - Must wear disposable gloves (nitrile, latex, or rubber) and additional protective equipment if splashing of fluids is expected, such as disposable and waterproof isolation gowns, face shields or goggles, and facemasks.
  - Following the preparation of the body, safely remove gloves (and other protective equipment, if used) and properly dispose them. Immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Shower as soon as possible.
  - If not wearing an isolation gown while preparing the body, wash clothes in the warmest setting possible and dry them completely.
  - If removing personal possessions (such as wedding rings) from the body or casket, clean and disinfect the items with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants and wash hands right away.
    - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

In addition to the requirements and restrictions outlined in this document, funeral homes must follow established protocol for the notification and coordination of COVID-19 associated deaths with the Department of Public Health and Social Services. For questions, please contact the Division of Environmental Health at 300-9579 or email the Division, [DPHSS-DEH@dphss.guam.gov](mailto:DPHSS-DEH@dphss.guam.gov).

  
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