



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL
AND FINANCIAL REGULATION
BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE
35 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0035

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Anne L. Head
Commissioner

October 14, 2020

Dear Maine Funeral Practitioner:

The purpose of this letter is to notify licensed Maine funeral practitioners of updated guidance explaining changes in the practice of funeral services permitted in **Stage 4** of the [Governor's Restarting Maine's Economy](#) beginning **October 6, 2020**.

Governor Mills' Executive Order #14 FY 20/21, [An Order to Implement Phase Four of the Restarting Maine's Economy Plan](#), increases the number of people allowed at indoor gatherings at establishments that provide and require seating for all invitees to 100 persons, or 50% of the facilitates permitted occupancy limit, whichever is less. The Executive Order maintains the 50-person limit for establishments who do not provide and require seating for all invitees. The exact language is below:

B. INDOOR GATHERINGS

Section I(A) of Executive Order 14 FY 19/20 and section I(A) of Executive Order 55 FY 19/20 are amended as follows:

1. For establishments that provide and require seating for all invitees, the indoor gathering limit is 50% of the facility's permitted occupancy limit or 100 persons, whichever is less. For the purposes of this section, such establishments include restaurants, bars, tasting rooms, houses of worship, social clubs, school cafeterias, and other establishments identified in the Restarting Plan.
2. For establishments that do not provide and require seating for all invitees, the indoor gathering limit is 50.
3. All indoor gatherings are subject to applicable location and activity-based requirements issued by Maine CDC, Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

The guidance issued by the Board of Directors and staff of the Maine Funeral Directors Association developed has been updated with this new information and is below for your use. If you have questions about this guidance, please refer to the list of resources at the end of the updated guidance

Please do not hesitate to contact the board at funeral.board@maine.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hawk

Jennifer Hawk, Board Administrator

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Guidance for Licensed Funeral Practitioners

Updated October 13, 2020

These recommendations are compiled from six separate documents issued by the state and referenced on the last page. Please note the following:

- **ALL GUIDANCE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS FACTS DEVELOP**
- MFDA will keep you apprised as necessary
- Please use common sense and err on the side of smaller, socially distanced and masked gatherings

Background

On March 24, 2020, the Governor's Executive Order 19 FY 19/20 designated "workers performing mortuary services including funeral homes, crematoriums, and cemetery workers" as Essential Businesses and Operations allowed to remain open during the State of Emergency.

In Guidance from the Funeral Board of April 3, 2020:

- **Arrangement conferences** limited to 5 persons (still enforced)
- Viewings with or without service limited to 5 persons (updated per guidelines below)
- **Acceptance of cremated remains** limited to 2 family members (still enforced)
- Viewings of an interment or burial limited to 10 persons. (updated per guidelines below)

Large Social Gatherings

Outdoor Gatherings: On August 1, 2020 the Governor's [Executive Order 6 FY 20/21](#) increased the *outdoor* gathering limit from 50 to 100 people. The EO states that "[t]he limit on the number of persons for outdoor gatherings is 5 people per 1,000 sq. ft. of occupiable outdoor space or not more than 100 persons, whichever is less. "

Indoor Gatherings: Per Governor Mills' [Executive Order 14 FY 20/21](#), for establishments that provide and require seating for all invitees, the indoor gathering limit is 50% of the facility's permitted occupancy limit or 100 persons, whichever is less. For establishments that do not provide and require seating for all invitees, the indoor gathering limit is 50.

Please note: Your square footage must allow for physical distancing guidelines that provide six feet between individuals **AND SIX FEET BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD GROUPS**. **Also, the guidance regarding use of face coverings, as described in more detail below, remains in effect.**

All gathering limits include staff, clergy, musicians, etc. remain in effect. The rules regarding **arrangement conferences** and **acceptance of cremated remains** continue to be in place.

The following is a checklist to use to implement the guidelines

General Planning: Building and Operational Guidelines

- Understand the square footage of your event space and limit the number of people to no more than the maximum allowed. Your square footage should allow for physical distancing, meaning six feet between individuals **AND SIX FEET BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD GROUPS**. Suggestions include:
 - Establish a “floor plan” with arranged seating. See [retail business guidelines](#).
 - Some examples are indicated below:



Social Distancing - Chairs



Social Distancing - Pews



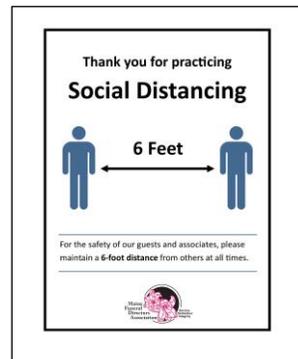
Social Distancing – Chairs, Outside Service

- Consider designated entrances and exits and one-way traffic patterns using signage.
- Per Governor Mills' [Executive Order #55 FY 19/20 - Order to Further Implement the Restarting Plan](#), each place of business accessible to the public shall, as soon as reasonably practicable and not later than June 5, 2020, post readily visible signs notifying customers of the requirement to wear cloth face covering in that setting.
- Place signage regarding steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 throughout the facility.

Some suggested samples available for download from the MFDA website are:



[Welcome Flyer](#)



[Social Distancing Flyer](#)



[Face Coverings Flyer](#)



[Stay Home Flyer](#)

- Maximize air flow in buildings whenever possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas of the building open to the public. Refer to the following documents for guidance on general cleaning and disinfection:
 - o [COVID-19 Prevention Checklist General Guidance](#) (State of Maine)
 - o [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) (CDC)
 - o [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#) (CDC)

- Have hand sanitizer readily available at entrances and exits of buildings.
- Avoid sharing of items such as the guestbook. Suggested alternatives include:
 - o Single use "Memory Cards"
 - o iPad sign in with continuous cleaning
 - o Online tribute page
 - o Single use pens
- Licensees need to be prepared to provide adequate contact information of attendees to CDC Contact Tracers in the event a COVID-19 case is linked to your establishment.

Use of Face Coverings:

- Per Governor Mills' [Executive Order 49 FY 19/20 - Stay Safer at Home Executive Order](#), individuals are required to wear cloth face coverings in public places where physical distancing is difficult to maintain, [as recommended by the U.S. CDC](#). The order identifies public settings as: indoor spaces that are accessible to the public such as grocery stores, retail stores, pharmacies and health care facilities; outdoor spaces such as playgrounds, busy parking lots, and other areas such as lines for take-out service where the public typically gathers in a smaller area; and public transportation such as a taxi, Uber, Lyft, ride-sharing or similar service; ferry, bus, or train; and any semi-enclosed transit stop or waiting area. Under Governor Mills' [Executive Order 6 FY 20/21](#), face coverings are recommended for children ages 2 to 4. Face coverings are required for children 5 and older in public settings. A cloth face covering is not required for anyone who has trouble breathing or related medical conditions, or who is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Per Governor Mills' [Executive Order 55 FY 19/20 - Order to Further Implement the Restarting Plan](#), in addition to the provisions set forth in Executive Order 49 §V, cloth face coverings shall be worn at large gatherings, including those held outside. Each place of business accessible to the public shall, as soon as reasonably practicable and not later than June 5, 2020, post readily visible signs notifying customers of the requirement to wear cloth face coverings in that setting. Such businesses may deny entry or service to a person who is not wearing a covering and is not otherwise exempt from the requirement to do so.
- The [CDC recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission. The CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.
- For Funeral Professionals and staff: The Maine Funeral Directors Association strongly recommends the use of face coverings for all staff and licensees because of our increased level of exposure. We have a responsibility to families we serve and our communities to prevent the spread of this disease.
- Any funeral establishment may require all attendees to wear masks, especially if it is the request of the family.

At the Arrangement Conference

- Communicate with the family about expectations regarding:
 - Social distancing requirements and possible limitation on space and attendees.
 - Discuss methods to limit attendance if necessary.
 - The use of face coverings.
 - The 14-day quarantine requirement: Per Governor Mills' [Executive Order Establishing Quarantine Restrictions On Travelers Arriving in Maine](#), any person, resident or non-resident, traveling into Maine must immediately self-quarantine for 14 days or for the balance of 14 days dating from the day of arrival. Currently residents from the states with a prevalence of active cases of COVID-19 that is similar or better to that in Maine are exempt from the quarantine requirement. Please refer to the [Keep Maine Health FAQ webpage](#) for a list of states exempted, since the designated states are subject to change and could change frequently. (<https://www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine/keepmainehealthy>). Visitors are instructed not to travel to Maine if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, and are advised not to travel to Maine if they are travelling from cities and regions identified as COVID-19 "hot spots".
 - If refreshments will be served, vendors must adhere to the [Seated Food and Drink Service checklist](#).
 - Inform family that other venues including churches, cemeteries, and restaurants may have different guidelines.
- Learn as much as possible about the group expected at the event.
 - Age and health of attendees.
 - Profession of the participants and their possible previous exposure.
 - Number of attendees coming from states or areas more heavily impacted by COVID-19 within 14 days of the event.

At the Funeral Service and Visitation

- Abide by gathering size limits. If the indoor physical space cannot seat or otherwise accommodate the gathering limit, attendance must be limited. Plan ahead for how you would manage that. Examples include:
 - Use of disposable tokens/invitations issued by the family
 - Limit public announcements when appropriate
- Maintain physical distancing at all times including organizers, staff, volunteers, vendors, and attendees inside as well as outside of the establishment.

- Avoid direct contact between families and guests. No greeting lines. Refrain from hugging, kissing, shaking hands, etc.
- Staff should monitor the door for appropriate number of people allowed inside a visitation on a rotating basis.
- All waiting lines outside should also comply with physical distancing requirements.

At the Internment

- Follow all guidelines set by the cemetery.

Reference Documents:

- [The Governor's Restarting Maine Economy document](#)
- [DECD's General Guidance to Business](#)
- [The Funeral Board April 3, 2020 Guidance](#)
- [The DECD's Guidance for Places of Worship](#)
- [Large Social Gatherings Checklist](#)
- [Religious Gatherings Checklist](#)