



Janet T. Mills
Governor

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

Anne L. Head
Commissioner

November 9, 2020

Dear Maine Funeral Practitioner:

On Sunday, November 1, Governor Mills [announced](#) changes to COVID-19 protocols as cases continue to spike. To implement these changes, the governor issued [Executive Order 16 FY 20/21](#) (EO) on Wednesday, November 5.

Of note for licensees of the Maine Funeral Board, *indoor gatherings will return to a maximum of 50 people*, regardless of capacity. The gathering limit on outdoor activities remains at 100 people under existing guidelines, with physical distancing and the use of face coverings.

In addition, the EO requires masks in *all* public settings, regardless of the ability to physical distance. Public spaces include indoor spaces that are accessible to the public and outdoor spaces.

The EO also included changes to the list of states exempted from Maine's 14-day quarantine travel restrictions. Effective Wednesday, November 4, 2020, people traveling from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut are no longer exempt from Maine's quarantine or negative test requirement. People coming here from these states must either quarantine for 14 days or receive a negative COVID-19 test with a sample taken less than 72 hours from arrival in Maine, quarantining while awaiting test results. This protocol includes Maine residents returning from one of the non-exempt states.

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 can be found on the Board's website. 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

OFFICES LOCATED AT: 76 NORTHERN AVENUE, GARDINER, MAINE

Guidance for Licensed Funeral Practitioners

Updated November 5, 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 "the 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 Mill's [Executive Order 16 FY 20/21](#), effective Wednesday, November 4, the indoor gathering limit is returned to 50 persons, as provided for in Section I (A) of [Executive Order 55 FY 19/20](#). Sections I(B)(1) & (2) of [Executive Order 14 FY 20/21](#) are hereby repealed.

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 that 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

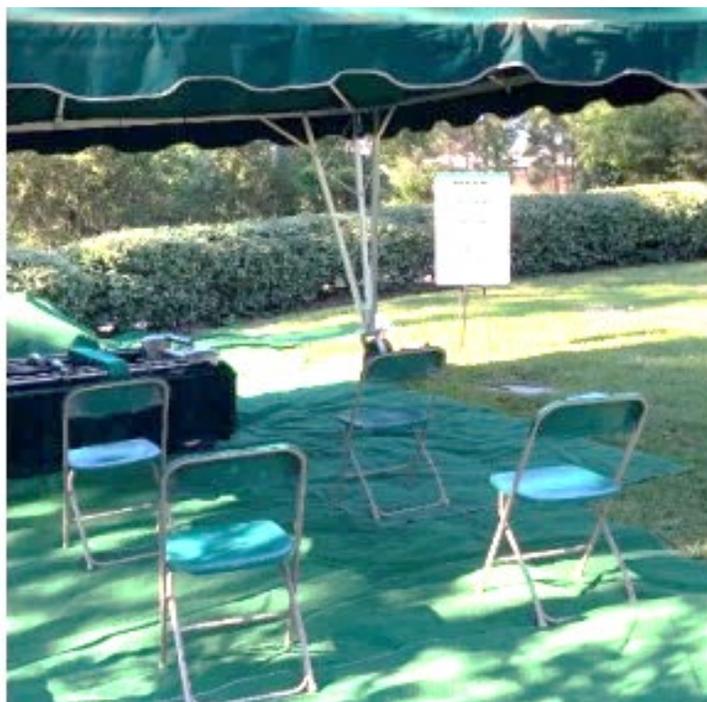
- Understand the square footage of your event space and limit the number of people to no more than the maximum allowed. Your square footage should allow for physical distancing, meaning six feet between individuals **AND SIX FEET BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD GROUPS**. Suggestions include:
 - Establish a “floor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



Social Distancing - Chairs



Social Distancing - Pews



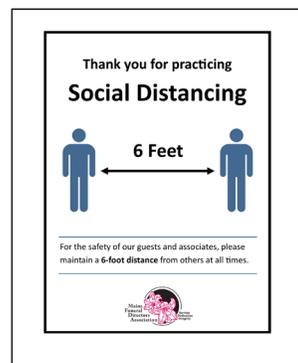
Social Distancing – Chairs, Outside Service

- Consider designated entrances and exits and one-way traffic patterns using signage.
- Per Governor Mills' [Executive Order 16 FY 20/21](#), effective Wednesday, November 4, owners and operators of indoor public settings shall, as soon as practicable, post plainly visible signs notifying entrants of the requirement to wear cloth face coverings, and may deny service or entry for non-compliance with the Governor's face covering requirements.
- 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 Mill's [Executive Order 16 FY 20/21](#), effective Wednesday, November 4, Face covering requirements, including those set forth in Executive Orders 49 FY 19/20, 2 FY 20/21, and 14 FY 20/21, apply in public settings regardless of the ability to maintain physical distance. Contrary language in Section V of Executive Order 49 FY 19/20 is hereby repealed.
- These requirements apply to both inside and outside the funeral home including the parking lot.
- 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.
- We have a responsibility to families we serve and our communities to prevent the spread of this disease.

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](#)