

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOLLOWING NEW GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS ISSUED ON 19 MARCH 2021

Issued on the authority of, and with the approval of the Most Revd Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town

FUNERALS FOR PERSONS WHOSE DEATH IS AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

The ACSA COVID-19 Advisory team has issued guidelines aimed at the safety of our members, our clergy as well as wider society. The intention is to save lives and reduce the risk of spread and infection as much as we are able to.

At times these may appear onerous and feel harsh. We are sympathetic to those feelings. We do however need to remember that church gatherings are seen as super-spreader events and funerals even more so. The government's COVID Command Council has also expressed concern about Easter gatherings and how these may pose a risk of increased infections.

Easter is fast approaching, and we have a number of services and rites that we follow at this time. These need to be amended in order to save lives. The sincerity of our worship and intentions towards God are not diminished by these changes.

Following the issuing of our [comprehensive guidelines of March 18, 2021](#), the Minister of Health on the 19th of March 2021 issued further regulations relating to funerals of COVID-19 related deaths. (GG NO 44297).

- A. [All funeral guidelines issued on 18 March 2021](#) remain in force for non-COVID deaths.**
- B. The revised guidelines for COVID-19 deaths come into effect immediately.**

These are the major changes:

- a) On the death of a person from COVID-19, any person involved with the body of the deceased needs to wear full PPE at all times.
- b) In the event of the person dying at home, the family or other person who has been in contact with the deceased at any time in the 14 days prior to death, will need to isolate. If they start showing

symptoms, especially shortness of breath, they need to seek medical attention.

- c) This means that those family members will not be able to attend the funeral as they could add to the spread.
- d) A clear body bag must be used for transferring the body from the place of death to, in our case, the undertakers for further handling.
- e) Family members must be provided with masks and gloves for the viewing and must not touch the body with their bare hands.
- f) Family members may only view the deceased one person at a time. The undertaker must monitor and supervise the viewing of the deceased so will be present during this time.
- g) Washing and preparation of the deceased for burial or cremation must be done by the undertaker.
- h) Should the family wish to wash and/or dress the body, they may do so under the funeral director's supervision, prior to placing the deceased in a coffin.
- i) Those performing the tasks in g) and h) above must wear PPE such as gloves, masks and waterproof coverall aprons.
- j) All PPE must be safely disposed of immediately after use.
- k) Once the body has been washed and prepared for burial, no further washing or handling of the deceased is permitted.
- l) Human remains and coffins **may not** be wrapped in plastic.

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR FUNERALS AND CREMATIONS FOR COVID-19 RELATED DEATHS

1. In the case of COVID-19 related deaths, the following changes for funerals apply:
2. The **MAXIMUM** number of attendees is the lesser of **50** people with social distance of 1,5m or in the case of smaller venues, 50% of capacity.
3. The number of 50 or less to include the altar party as well as the undertakers.
4. The deceased will be brought to the church or crematorium on the day of burial only.
5. The deceased may not be touched at all and the undertaker will remain present to ensure compliance.
6. The organiser or family member who applies for an authorisation letter to bury or cremate the deceased is also responsible for ensuring that health requirements are adhered to during the funeral proceedings.
7. Distributing printed funeral programmes to people attending the funeral is prohibited.
8. Singing is prohibited.
9. Speaking without a facemask is prohibited.

10. Microphones are allowed provided that they are sanitised after each speaker.
11. No after-tears or funeral gatherings are allowed.
12. The burial or cremation of the deceased MUST take place within five days from the date of death.
13. The local district or municipality (or other applicable authority) must intervene where this is not done.
14. A notice will be given to the family of the deceased to have the funeral or cremation within 24 hours of the notice.
15. In the event that this is not complied with, the authority that issued the notice must immediately proceed with the burial or cremation of the deceased.
16. The undertaker must inform the relevant authority if the undertaker is aware or suspects that the five days will not be complied with.
17. Should the death rate appear to exceed the capacity of available space to keep mortal remains, the relevant health authority and/or municipality may intervene to facilitate multi-burials.
18. People carrying the coffin must wear disposable hand gloves which must be disposed of properly.
19. If burial is taking place, implements used to cover the grave need to be carefully sanitised as well as the hands of the person going to use the implement. The use of machinery for this purpose, if possible, is preferred.

We will continue to pray for comfort and healing and also to advocate for equitable access to vaccinations and that vaccination is for the common good.

23 March 2021
ACSA COVID ADVISORY TEAM