

The Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) has written this Attendance Guidance to the profession to provide rules and recommended best practices to support the implementation of the Government of Ontario's COVID-19 regulation on funeral services, introduced on Saturday, June 13, 2020.

This Attendance Guidance also supports the BAO's June 13 [Revised Registrar's Directive: Changes to funeral and visitation attendance](#), which focused on this option:

- “**...Subject to certain conditions**, the COVID-19 maximum attendance restriction allows for **30 per cent capacity for indoor funerals and visitations**, and **50 attendees for outdoor funeral services**.”

It is important to note that [Max-10 Registrar's Directive of April 7 remains in place](#), with the new ‘30% indoor / 50 attendees outdoor’ allowance being exemptions if – **and only if** – the conditions of the June 13 Registrar's Directive are met.

The only change to the Max-10 Registrar's Directive is the ‘30% indoor / 50 attendees outdoor’ option – **all other government restrictions, BAO Registrar's Directives, Notices and guidance remain in place**. (\*An exception is listed under the Crematoriums and Hydrolysis section of this Attendance Guidance.)

The BAO continues to act in order to **minimize the risk** of infection to families and your staff from becoming ill and your business having to shutdown for a few weeks because of a COVID-19 infection.

## **INDOOR OR OUTDOOR FUNERALS & VISITATIONS**

- For indoor or outdoor funeral and visitation gatherings, the **funeral director (FD) is responsible** for all family and visitors, and their adherence to all current measures in government laws/restrictions and BAO Registrar's Directives, Notices and Guidance, including those which occur in a place of worship.
- All persons attending the gathering must remain at least two metres (six feet) apart from each other and from persons conducting the funeral, unless they are members of the same household.
- For every 10 people, there must be at least one funeral home staff member to monitor and ensure physical distancing of two metres.
- Continue logging/guest-booking of all family and visitors to each funeral and visitation for contact tracing purposes, in the event that this becomes needed.
- Hand sanitizer must be provided for visitors throughout funeral home facilities.

## INDOOR FUNERALS & VISITATIONS

- The persons conducting the funeral or visitation (**under the responsibility of the FD**) must ensure that the number of persons occupying any room in the building or structure, while maintaining physical distancing, **does not exceed 30 per cent of the capacity of the particular room.**
  - You must consider that **30 per cent capacity is diminished by physical distancing, pews and furniture.**
  - Therefore, each funeral home must calculate how many people can actually be accommodated, while complying with the two-metre physical distancing rule. This will likely be much less than a venue's posted occupancy capacity. The number of people permitted includes clergy, officiants and musicians, but does not include funeral home staff.
    - Examples - A room of 200 square metres (2,150 square feet) has an Ontario Building Code capacity of 190 people. However, 30 per cent capacity and physical distancing will reduce the total number permitted to 36 people. Similarly, a 25x25 square foot room has a normal capacity of 60 people, but the 30 per cent rule and physical distancing will shrink that number to 10 people.
- **Wearing of masks, or face coverings, by everyone is mandatory. This includes all staff and attendees** (Paper disposable masks are sufficient, not N95. People may wear their own masks or face coverings). Current research indicates that masks contribute significantly to the reduction of infection.
- The persons conducting the funeral must ensure that it is conducted in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including any advice, recommendations or instructions on physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting.
- The persons conducting the funeral must ensure that all spaces including washrooms that have been made available to persons attending the gathering are cleaned and disinfected on a continuous basis by staff dedicated to this purpose.
- The persons conducting the funeral must ensure that in the case of multiple visitation periods, attendees must wait in their car until permitted access to the visitation. There must not be a gathering of people congregating outside of their vehicles waiting for their turn.

## OUTDOOR FUNERALS & VISITATIONS

- The persons conducting the funeral and visitation must ensure that no more than 50 people are in attendance (**The FD is responsible for ensuring this.**) The number of people permitted includes clergy, officiants and musicians, but does not include funeral home staff.
- All persons attending the funeral or visitation must remain at least two metres apart from each other, and from persons conducting the funeral or visitation, unless they are members of the same household.
- The persons conducting the funeral or visitation must ensure that it is conducted in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including any advice, recommendations or instructions on physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting.
- The persons conducting the funeral or visitation must ensure that any washrooms that have been made available to persons attending the gathering are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.

## CEMETERIES

- At cemetery, for every 10 people there must be one funeral home staff member to monitor physical distancing (**FD is responsible**).
- Cemetery operators may choose to restrict graveside to family only, with physical distancing in place. This will continue to be supported by the BAO.
- Cemetery operators may continue to further restrict attendance, in addition to restrictions already in place by government and the BAO, including those in this Attendance Guidance. FDs should communicate these restrictions to the families in advance of the service.

## CREMATORIUMS AND HYDROLYSIS

- The BAO Registrar's Directives regarding witnessing and scheduled holds of cremations are RESCINDED. (April 21- In-Person Witnessing at Cremations Prohibited; and the April 22 – Addendum to: In-Person Witnessing at Cremations Prohibited).
- \***Witnessing can now occur** with attendees' numbers limited to 30 per cent of the facilities permitted occupancy rating reduced by physical distancing requirements (two metres of separation between people).



Bereavement  
Authority of  
Ontario

Attendance Guidance:  
Funerals and Visitations  
*June 15, 2020*

## REMEMBER

- All other COVID-19 government restrictions, BAO Registrar's Directives, Notices and Guidance remain in place.
- All are available on the BAO's website, specifically on its [COVID-19 Ready...together](#) web index page.