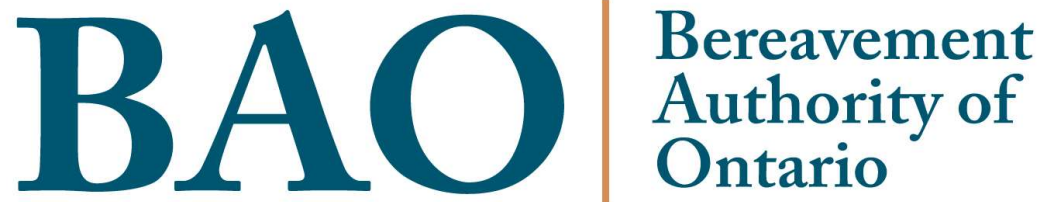


# Registrar's COVID-19 Update

**Your adherence to Registrar's Directives  
and your professionalism are saving lives**

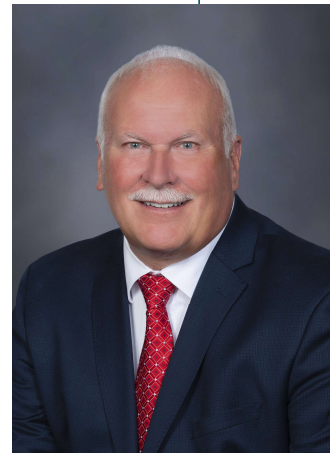


**Ready...together**

**Carey Smith**

**CEO/Registrar**

**April 28, 2020**



# Keep up your professional and caring work

- ❖ Thank you for joining us today
- ❖ **And thank you for following the rules**
- ❖ Registrar's Directives, guidance and advice – none of them work without you putting them into action
- ❖ You are saving lives

# Today's Agenda

## What's new since Friday, April 10?

- when we last met on a webcast

1. **Absolute necessity** of funeral homes, crematoriums, cemeteries & AH to keep operating
2. **BAO collaboration** & alignment with Chief Coroner and Ontario Government
3. **EDR** - Expedited Death Response process
4. **Tough changes for grieving families**
5. **Questions**

# Absolute necessity of funeral homes, crematoriums, cemeteries & AH to keep operating

## Funeral Homes (FHs)

- ❖ That's why we have the **10-max directive for the entire FH**
  - (Directives: March 23 – 10 max; April 7 – 10 max in entire FH)
  - **To protect families and to protect all of you**
- ❖ We can't have funeral homes go out of commission for two weeks
  - ❖ **It would only take one transmission to one staff member to shutdown your operation**
- ❖ The impact on your business, community and the province would be significant
  - Putting more pressure on other neighbouring FHs – especially if this occurred at several FHs
- ❖ **Reason: Newfoundland**
  - Where half of all COVID-19 cases trace back to one funeral home. **Funerals are now banned there.**

# Absolute necessity of funeral homes, crematoriums, cemeteries & AH to keep operating

## Funeral Homes (FHs)

- ❖ FH directors and staff are advised to tell families they must follow the **10-maximum directive at cemeteries**
  - Families have been turning out at some cemeteries in much larger numbers
- ❖ FH directors and staff need to set the expectations of families that the 10-max directive applies to cemeteries
- ❖ **Add this in the funeral service contract** - to set this expectation early on
- ❖ **Death notice must also state the 10-max rule for both FH and cemeteries**

# Absolute necessity of funeral homes, crematoriums, cemeteries & AH to keep operating

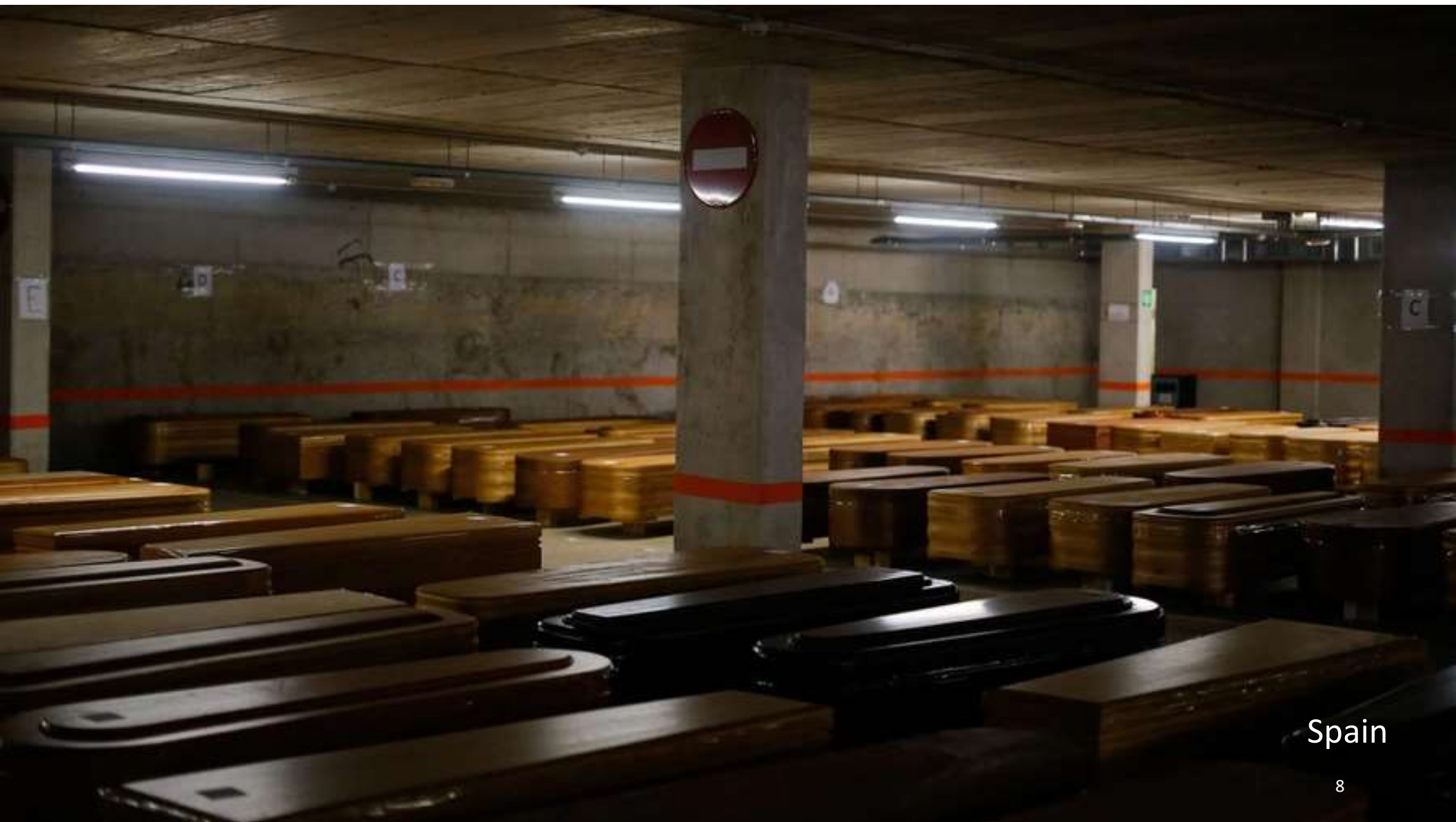
## Crematoriums, cemeteries & alkaline hydrolysis

- ❖ Ready to operate 24/7
  - ❖ **March 24 Directive** – Staff and equipment must be ready to accommodate requests for interments, including ground burials, crypts in a mausoleum, crematoriums, and cremated remains in a columbarium.
  - ❖ **April 7 Directive** – Reminder: That all crematoriums in Ontario must be ready to operate all day, every day, seven (7) days a week.
- ❖ 75 crematoriums in Ontario – major hit when one or two shutdown (for any reason)
- ❖ **Reason:** Italy, Spain, New York – Stockpiling of bodies in arenas, churches, community centres

# Absolute necessity of funeral homes, crematoriums, cemeteries & AH to keep operating



Madrid converted an Olympic-sized ice rink to a morgue, kitted out with hospital beds. Photo: March 24, 2020



Spain

Temporary Morgues  
Brooklyn, NY





Italy



Italy



Hart Island, New York

News / Local News

## Death in the time of COVID-19: overwhelmed morgues, busy funeral staff

Matthew Lapierre • Local Journalism Initiative Reporter  
5 days ago • 4 minute read



Jean-Charles Cardinal of J.J. Cardinal funeral homes laments that the bereaved have been robbed of parts of the grieving process. "People need the warmth of the human touch." PIERRE OBENDRAUF / Montreal Gazette

# BAO collaboration & alignment with Chief Coroner and Ontario Government

## **Collaboration to serve families and licensees better**

- **“Max 10 or less” rule**
- **EDR Plan created by BAO/ Office of Chief Coroner**
- **Electronic Medical Certificates of Death and simplified access to burial permits**
- **In-person witnessing of cremations prohibited**

# EXPEDITED DEATH RESPONSE

OCC TEAM - Toll Free: 1 (833) 915-0868  
Toronto: 1 (647) 792-0440  
Email: [occteam@ontario.ca](mailto:occteam@ontario.ca)



Dedicated hospital/LTC staff (EDRT) facilitates contact with family and Funeral Home within 1 hour (3 hrs for LTC). EDRT ensures MCOD is available or notifies OCC Team.



OCC team is advised and prepares EMCOD (in case one is not with decedent).



FH attends hospital/LTC staging area and gives stretcher to hospital/LTC staff. (FH supplies pouch to LTC.) FH receives disinfected, pouch with deceased & takes into their care.



Transfer to FH. Disinfect stretcher and equipment



At FH, confirm identity of body. Prepare decedent for disposition.



FH obtains EMCOD if one not provided at hospital. FH completes Form 15 and transmits docs to local registrar to obtain Burial Permit



FH transfers to final disposition

# EDR

## Key advantages of this strategy:

- i. Dignity and respect of decedents and families; important for families to keep death care as “normal” as possible. All religions hold the body as sacred.
- ii. Moves decedents from healthcare to funeral sector without delay to place them into care of people best-trained and equipped to handle them.
- iii. Relieves burden on healthcare – devote their attention on the living
- iv. Limits movement/transfer of bodies to prevent redundant handling,
- v. Reduces risk to healthcare & deathcare staff (by reducing exposure), reduces use of PPE.
- vi. Opportunities for mistakes in identification and transfer are reduced
- vii. Avoids mass storage of decedents in alternative facilities (trailers, arenas etc.)
- viii. Deathcare remains local vs centralized outside community

# Retirement homes not part of EDR

- ❖ Retirement homes are different from long-term care (LTC)
  - Residents at retirement homes don't require nursing care
  - Retirement homes were not, and are not, part of the EDR
- ❖ Funeral home and transfer staff are to continue entering retirement homes, as they have previously (using PPE as needed)
- ❖ Keep in mind – each retirement home is different
  - Some combine retirement living residences with LTC sections or floors within the same building

# Collaboration with Government – Electronic Death Registrations & Medical Certificates of Death

- Documents can be sent by fax
- But original Form 15 (Statement of Death) must have an ink signature

## Electronic Transmission or Faxing of Death Registration Documents

As a temporary measure, outlined below is an interim process to facilitate the issuance of a burial permit during these challenging times.

Effective immediately, funeral homes and municipalities may transmit death registration documents electronically (e.g., encrypted email) or by fax for the purpose of obtaining a burial permit. Please ensure funeral homes continue to work with their municipal partners as operational changes may be required to implement the temporary process described below:

- An amendment has been made to Regulation 1094 of the Vital Statistics Act to allow a copy to be made of the medical certificate of death. Effective immediately, a copy of a medical certificate of death may now be sent between coroners, funeral directors and division registrars (including deputy division registrars and sub-registrars) for the issuance of a burial permit.
- A funeral home may send a copy of the statement of death and medical certificate of death and/or coroner's warrant to bury through a secure electronic method or by fax to the municipality; and the municipality may send the burial permit and acknowledgement of death through a secure electronic method or by fax to a funeral home. Original registration documents will need to be sent to the municipality weekly, on a best effort basis, for processing.

# Tough changes for grieving families

- ❖ **10 max Registrar's Directive**
- ❖ **Physical distancing** at FH, and everywhere
- ❖ **No hugging or touching** family member who died, may have died of COVID-19
- ❖ **EDR** – Dictates that families choose a FH immediately after the death of a family member in hospital.
- ❖ **EDR** – 1-hour pick up of deceased from hospital / 3-hours for LTC
- ❖ **April 21-22 Directives:** No pushing the button or witnessing cremations in real-time

# Tough changes for grieving families

## **April 21-22 Registrar's Directives**

- ❖ No in-person, real-time witnessing of cremations is permitted.
- ❖ Licensees are not allowed to book “holds” – as this would delay cremations.
- ❖ No pushing of buttons to start cremations by anyone other than the crematorium operator's staff.
- ❖ Upon arrival at the crematorium, crematorium staff are advised to take control of the body from the funeral home staff and are reminded to follow all disinfecting procedures.

# Tough changes for grieving families

## **April 21-22 Registrar's Directives**

- ❖ Crematorium staff and funeral home staff, like everyone, must observe physical distancing throughout all transfer procedures.
- ❖ All faiths have endured compromises, stress and more sadness because of the directives, and changes.
- ❖ We are sensitive to this.
- ❖ We also know these directives, and the others, are necessary to save lives.

# Questions?

Thank you all for the professional, caring work you do everyday.

❖ **Ready Together** - BAO COVID-19 info page

<https://thebao.ca/covid-19-update-links/>