



PUBLIC HEALTH TASK FORCE

TRIBAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PO BOX 590

EAGLE BUTTE, SD 57625

GUIDANCE FOR FUNERALS **DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

AS OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 15th, 2020

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (CRST) continues to closely monitor the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The CRST recognizes that residents of the Cheyenne River Reservation need to host and attend funeral services in a safe manner. When a loved one dies, it is important for friends and family to gather share stories and memories of the deceased, however most people understand that hosting gatherings now could be dangerous to those who would want to participate.

Funeral officiants and directors must understand that whenever they have funerals during the COVID-19 public health emergency, they have a greater social responsibility for safety.

GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines are to hold funeral services while protecting guests and officiants from exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

1. ATTENDANCE

- a. Limit the number of people allowed indoors to 30 square feet space per person.
- b. Shorten service times up to 45 min. or less and avoid overnight wake services with large crowds in order to cut down potential exposure time.
- c. Hold special services for guests who are high-risk for COVID-19 (older adults and people with severe underlying health conditions).
- d. Consider a virtual option for guests who cannot attend due to reaching maximum capacity or high-risk status.
- e. Refer to EO 2.1 for guidance on guests traveling from off the reservation or contact the CRST Command Center at (605) 964-3637.
- f. It is the funeral officiant and director's responsibility to communicate health protection protocols through signs and handouts to guests.
- g. When possible, limit children attending and do not allow children to run around.
- h. Conduct as many activities as possible outside. For example, have the giveaway or meal outside.

2. PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19

- a. Face mask covering must be worn at all times inside and outside of the building.
- b. When feasible, open windows and doors and/or use fans to promote airflow.

- c. Guests should not attend if they 1) have symptoms of a respiratory illness (coughing or fever), 2) have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days, 3) were in close contact with an individual who had symptoms of COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19, or 4) have traveled to or from out of state or to a hotspot in SD within the past 7 days.
- d. Members of the same household can sit together as a family unit but should be seated at least 6 ft. from other families.
- e. When feasible, consider having funeral services outdoors.
- f. Encourage guests to avoid hugs or handshakes.
- g. Encourage families to “Aziliya” or smudge with sage.
- h. For feeds, encourage guests to sit with their tiwahe/household and position tables and chairs 6 feet apart. Limit those serving and preparing food to <10 people and require gloves and masks. Serve plates instead of self-serving or buffet style.

3. INTENSIFY CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- a. Provide hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol) and/or soap and disposable hand towels in lobbies, entrances, kitchens, dining rooms, and bathrooms.
- b. Regular disinfecting must be done before and after each funeral service.
- c. Routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, such as books, pews, chairs, altars, etc.

4. SERVICES

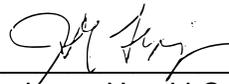
- a. Avoid person-to-person giveaways. Alternatively, disinfect and enclose giveaway items in individual plastic bags, and deliver using gloves and masks.
- b. When possible, offer a blessing to all guests as a group instead of communion. If communion is offered, refrain from using shared plates, bowls or drinking glasses and encourage 6-foot distance between guests if lines are formed.
- c. If a sign of peace is offered, do this verbally without touching others.
- d. People who died from COVID-19 can be buried or cremated.

5. TRACKING

- a. Funeral directors must be prepared to assist public health departments to identify and find recent contacts of people who discover they are infected. This may include rapidly identifying and contacting all people who had contact with a COVID-19 patient who attended the funeral. Funeral directors must set up a system to collect information for all attendees.

7-15-20

DATE



Chairman Harold C. Frazier

RESOURCES

CDC. Funeral Guidance. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/funeral-guidance.html>

National Funeral Directors Association. Funerals and Visitations. <https://www.nfda.org/covid-19/visitations-funerals>