



Rockford Region Rebounding Phase 3/4: Recovery and Revitalization Funeral Services

Guiding Principles

- Response to the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving based on the available information and local disease activity.
- As Winnebago County phases into reopening to the public that COVID-19 has not been eradicated and that hygiene best practices and social distancing practices must be maintained in order to help prevent a resurgence in new COVID-19 cases from occurring.
- Funeral services give families an opportunity to express their love and respect for the individual who has died and their love, comfort, and support to each other. These services have significant cultural and spiritual meanings.
- Many families may not have been able to be present with their deceased family member due to visitor restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This guidance was developed as part of the *Rockford Region Rebounding* efforts.
- Funeral homes and cemeteries throughout Winnebago County will continue to adhere to the *Restore Illinois*, Executive Orders, and guidance/rules issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Funeral homes and cemeteries must comply with all applicable local municipal ordinances.
- Funerals may be conducted in places of worship which may operate under different guidelines related to capacity and group size.
- Phase 4: Revitalization is anticipated to begin June 26, 2020.

Visitation and/or Services at Funeral Homes

- Post signage at home entryway stating individuals should not enter with a fever, symptoms of COVID-19 or close contact to a confirmed case of COVID-19. Most common signs of illness are fever over 100°F, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, body aches, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell.
- Dates, times, and locations of funeral services should not be publicized and should be maintained as private.
- Designate a member of the family to help with mourners who may want to reach out to provide physical comfort.
- Limit gatherings to no more than ten (10) during Phase 3 and fifty (50) during Phase 4.
- Utilize all spaces within the funeral homes to maintain 6 feet of social distancing.
- Provide hand sanitizer at entries and restrooms.
- Sanitize restrooms on an hourly basis and post the schedule of sanitation.
- All individuals over the age of 2 years who can medically tolerate it, should wear a facial covering if attending.

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- Since singing can spread droplets up to 26 feet, groups of singers or choirs are not permitted at this time.
- If a solo singer/cantor is going to participate, they should perform a minimum of 26 feet from others or behind a drum shield or similar barrier.
- Consider requesting a list of mourners/guests from the family to assist in capacity limits.
- A registry/guest book should be maintained.
- Increase air flow through HVAC or opening windows as appropriate.
- Continue the practice of cards and memorials being sent directly to the family home.
- No food is permitted. Water may be supplied in single-use disposable water bottles.

Visitation and/or Services at Places of Worship

- Places of worship will be allowed to operate at 25% of building capacity not to exceed 100 attendees in Phases 3 and 4.
- With this different guidance, places of worship may have group sizes larger than other sectors and funeral directors will respect their decisions. However, funeral directors will do so in a manner that does not put any of their team at risk.
- If the funeral service and/or visitation is going to be conducted in place of worship, work with the place of worship to determine flow of mourners, location of decedent remains, and family to support social distancing and minimize congregating. Consider use of the sanctuary and not the narthex.
- All individuals over the age of 2 years who can medically tolerate it, should wear a facial covering if attending.
- No food is permitted. Water may be supplied in single-use disposable water bottles. A registry/guest book should be maintained.
- Continue the practice of cards and memorials being sent directly to the family home.
- Dates, times, and locations of funeral services should not be publicized and should be maintained as private.

Services at Cemeteries

- Cemeteries may set their own policies to ensure social distancing and the health of their team but will work with families and funeral directors to accommodate a larger group in an open air environment.
- Tents at graveside should not be enclosed by walls.
- Households must be separated by six (6) feet into groups of ten (10) or less but not to exceed fifty (50) in total.
- All individuals over the age of 2 years who can medically tolerate it, should wear a facial covering if attending.



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- No food is permitted. Water may be supplied in single-use disposable water bottles.
- A registry/guest book should be maintained.
- Continue the practice of cards and memorials being sent directly to the family home.
- Funeral Directors will provide a closing statement based on Cemetery guidelines.

References

Communities, Schools, Workplaces, and Events. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>.

Community and Faith Based Organizations. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>.

COVID-19 Guidance for Places of Worship and Providers of Religious Services. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/places-worship-guidance>

Executive and Administrative Orders for the state of Illinois. <https://www2.illinois.gov/government/executive-orders>.

Funeral Homes Guidance. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/funeral-homes>.

Hand Hygiene Recommendations. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hand-hygiene.html>.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Pages/RestoreLP3.aspx>

List N: Disinfectants for Use against SARS-CoV-2. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Winnebago County Health Department. www.wchd.org.