

## COVID-19 Guidance for Cemeteries

The [Bereavement Authority of Ontario](#) (BAO) is a government delegated authority that works on behalf of the provincial Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. The BAO is responsible for licensed funeral establishment operators, directors and pre-planners, and cemetery, crematorium and alternative disposition operators. As of September 21, 2020, the BAO Registrar's Directive states that the indoor [gathering limit for cemeteries](#) is 25 people, not counting staff. This limit applies to gatherings, attendances, funerals, visitations, funeral receptions, and graveside services.

For **outdoor** funeral services (visitations, receptions and graveside services) the gathering limit is up to a maximum of 100 attendees at a cemetery or funeral home's property providing:

- The service is under the control and direction of a funeral director.
- The service (at the cemetery) has the consent of the cemetery operator for numbers over 25.
- Funeral directors have one staff member for every 10 attendees to properly manage the gathering and ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- Guests are registered/logged to enable contact tracing.

The [Reopening Ontario Act](#), which states that the gathering limit for funerals must not exceed 30 per cent, applies strictly for gatherings in a building or structure that is not a private dwelling and makes provisions to ensure that everyone in attendance complies with public health requirements for physical distancing.

The decision to close or limit access to a cemetery is within the rights of the cemetery director and/or manager, and are aligned with the directives issued by the BAO. Cemetery directors should review their infection prevention and control (IPAC) policies to ensure they are consistent with professional practices, including guidance provided by the [Bereavement Authority of Ontario](#).

### Stay Informed

- Stay informed at [toronto.ca/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/COVID19) to ensure you have the most current guidance.
- Refer to the [COVID-19 guidance for funeral homes](#) for more information.
- Refer to the [COVID-19 guidance for planning for funeral receptions/celebrations of life](#).

### Staff Health Screening Policy

Staff must be [self-screened](#) before each shift. Staff must inform their supervisor, and stay home if they are sick or unwell. Anyone who becomes ill while on the premises must go home right away and [self-isolate](#). They should contact Telehealth Ontario, their health care provider or a COVID-19 assessment centre for guidance about testing.

## Staff Training

- Ensure staff are trained on IPAC measures, policies and procedures.
- Ensure staff have received additional training on COVID-19 precautions, including occupational health and safety guidelines.
- Train staff on the City mask bylaw (see below) and your organization's mask policy, including who is [exempt](#). Proof of exemption is not required.
- Instruct staff and volunteers on proper hand hygiene techniques and respiratory etiquette, when to use masks, the [proper use of mask](#), and how to clean or discard single use masks appropriately.
- Schedule frequent cleaning of public spaces, including high-touch surfaces. More information cleaning and disinfecting can be found [here](#).

## Mask Bylaw

The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City of Toronto [bylaw](#). Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. See [sample policy](#) on page 3. Communicate this new policy to staff and customers. Masks or face coverings can be worn outside where one is unable to maintain the appropriate physical distance with those they do not live with.

## Visitations

- All visitors must [self-screen](#) for symptoms of COVID-19 and may not enter the cemetery if they have symptoms. Post the health screening questionnaire on your website so visitors, staff and customers can self-screen before arrival.
- Limit indoor services to 25 people, not counting staff.
- The use of masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, including enclosed mausoleums.
- Provide alcohol-based (70-90% alcohol concentration) hand sanitizer stations by entrances and high-traffic areas.
- During a burial service at the cemetery, the operators must ensure everyone maintains a distance of two metres/six feet between those who are not from the same household.

## Attendance Record

- Collect the date, names and contact phone number or email address of the staff, volunteers, and visitors who attended the service. This will support public health contact tracing efforts in the event that a visitor or staff tests positive or an outbreak is identified.
- Providing personal information is voluntary for attendees. Your organization must obtain a person's consent and inform them of the purpose and legal authority for collecting this information.
- Operators must take reasonable action to secure the personal information collected (e.g. locked drawer or secure electronic system).

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- Any personal information that is collected for COVID-19 contact tracing can only be used for this purpose, unless an individual provides their consent. Records should be kept for 30 days, and then shredded.

### Public Health Measures for Visitors

- [Wash hands](#) often, including before and after visiting the gravesite, or use [hand-sanitizer](#) with an alcohol concentration of at least 70%.
- Maintain a six feet/two metres distance from people you don't live with at all times, including visits to the gravesite.
- Wear a mask at all times when entering indoor spaces (e.g. mausoleum).
- [Cover your cough](#) or sneeze with your elbow or into a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Avoid touching face with unwashed hands.
- Download the [COVID Alert app](#) so you can be notified directly if you have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

### Print and Post Signs

- [Mandatory mask or face covering bylaw](#) and [self-screening](#) sign should be posted at all entrances.
- [Physical distancing](#) and [how to protect yourself](#) signs can be posted in high visibility areas.

### More information

For more information, visit our website at [toronto.ca/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/COVID19) or call the Toronto Public Health Hotline at 416-338-7600.

### References

Bereavement Authority of Ontario (May 2020). <https://thebao.ca/covid-19-cemetery-restrictions/>