



From The NC Board of Funeral Service.....

As the Coronavirus continues to spread across the United States, it has direct and immediate impact on North Carolina. With regard to the practice of funeral service, the NC Board of Funeral Service will send you regular updates on the crisis as more information is announced at both the state and federal levels.

As an important first step, please visit the Board website at www.ncbfs.org for links to current, critical sources of information regarding the virus and its impact on our state and profession.

UPDATE TO LICENSEES: Board Operations/Announcements

March 18, 2020

Restrictions on Public Gatherings

Please be reminded that funeral establishments may not permit more than 100 individuals from a public gathering which includes funeral services, visitations, receptions, memorial services, and related events. This number includes funeral staff. Any number exceeding 100 would not comply with the Executive Order. We have learned that some establishments are limiting gatherings to no more than 50 individuals which complies with the Executive Order because the gathering is less than 100 individuals.

We have heard from several licensees who expressed confusion by the recommendations from the White House or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention [CDC]. The White House encourages organizations to limit public gatherings to no more than 10 individuals. The CDC recommends limiting public gatherings to no more than 50 individuals. Please remember that these are recommendations or recommended guidelines; they are not binding on you. The Governor's Executive Order is binding.

It is Board staff's opinion that allowing more than 100 individuals to attend a public gathering with only 25-50 allowed in a visitation room at a time is not in compliance with the Executive Order because there would be more than 100 individuals gathered at the same location. Please remember that the restriction on public gatherings is a public health mitigation issue intended to minimize the risk of transmitting COVID-19 among gathered individuals. Board staff understands that some families are insistent on a funeral gathering that may certainly exceed 100 individuals, and we understand the very difficult position licensees face in such situations. To every extent possible, please convey and emphasize to families that the Executive Order is intended to minimize the risk of illness and to reduce any further spread of this devastating and deadly virus.

Compliance Inspections

After careful consideration of the current situation with the risks associated with transmission of the Coronavirus, we are suspending all inspections of licensed establishments through March 27, 2020. We will assess at the end of this period whether or not to continue the suspension of inspections. If you have compliance issues or questions, please continue to contact the On-Call Compliance Inspector.

Continuing Education

Please check the Board's continuing education course listings frequently for information about cancellations and postponements as a result of the current crisis. You'll find those listings at www.ncbfs.org on the homepage.

Please note that two of our establishments, Washburn & Dorsey and Padgett-King, have partnered to offer two 2-hour sessions of a CE course dealing with the Coronavirus on April 8, 2020, at no charge to attendees. The listing is on the CE page on the website under classroom courses.

Preneed Annual Report

Board staff reminds licensees that Preneed Annual Reports are due on Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

Reminder

The Board office suite in Raleigh, NC, is currently closed to the public. If you are planning to hand-deliver items that are time-sensitive, please be reminded that you may drop off your materials by placing them in the drop-box we have provided outside the office. We date-stamp all items received daily to assure confirmation of receipt.

Please know the Board's appreciation for your diligence and professional responses to the current challenges we all face in dealing with the serious public health threat that the Coronavirus and COVID-19 present.

We understand the difficult choices you must make to assure compliance with the Governor's Executive Order while at the same time trying to accommodate families who are planning funeral services for loved ones who have passed away.

We value your efforts and commitment to our profession.