



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: PUBLIC GATHERING RESTRICTIONS

March 23, 2020

On March 14, 2020, Governor Cooper issued an Executive Order pertaining to the Coronavirus and its impact on North Carolina. The Order prohibited mass gatherings of 100 individuals or more in the same location and closed K-12 public schools pursuant to the Emergency Management Act. Violations of this provision may be punishable as a Class 2 misdemeanor.

At his press briefing this afternoon, the Governor announced that he was reducing the number of individuals at a mass gathering from 100 to 50. His new directive is aimed at taking additional steps to minimize the risks associated with the spread of the virus by encouraging North Carolinians to heed warnings not to congregate in large gatherings. Limiting public gatherings to 50 is consistent with the current recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In discussions with many of you last week, I understand that you already lowered this threshold to 50 or even less in some cases. I've also noted the many ways that you are collaborating with each other in your communities to issue public statements concerning the restrictions on public gatherings. All of these efforts are critically important in assuring the safety and well-being of funeral home staff as well as guests and family in attendance at funeral services, visitations, memorial services and committals.

Please make all necessary effort to assure family members of the critical need for social distancing and limits on public gatherings as a way to contain the spread of COVID-19. That's a primary reason that Governor Cooper has extended retail and business closures to include gyms, theaters, hair salons and the like. Most public health officials on national media outlets are consistent in their view that the spread of the virus has not peaked, and they are not certain as to a timeframe for the numbers to hit a particular threshold before we see fewer positive cases, infections and deaths.

BOARD OPERATIONS

Beginning today, most Board staff will be working at home through this week to comply with warnings from public health authorities to avoid social contact to every extent that is reasonable and practical in

the workplace. The Executive Director, the Director of Preneed Programs and Services, the Administrative Officer, and the receptionist will be on-site each day to respond to your calls, questions and concerns. It would be most helpful if you would email any requests for assistance or questions about a particular topic to the following program areas:

ADMINISTRATION

Executive Director	Stephen E. Davis	sdavis@ncbfs.org
Assistant Director	Amy Mauldin	amauldin@ncbfs.org
Compliance Officer	Brett Lisenbee	blisenbee@ncbfs.org
General Counsel/Legal	Catherine Lee	clee@ncbfs.org
Administrative Officer	Karen Loveland	kl Loveland@ncbfs.org
Continuing Education	Glenda Ryan	gryan@ncbfs.org
Receptionist/Admin Asst	Judy Burnett	receptionist@ncbfs.org

AT-NEED SERVICES/LICENSURE

At-Need Services/Licensure	Amy Mauldin	amauldin@ncbfs.org
Removal and Transport Permits	Stephen Davis	sdavis@ncbfs.org

PRENEED SERVICES AND MUTUAL BURIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Preneed Program Manager	Paul L. Richardson	prichardson@ncbfs.org
Senior Preneed Services Specialist	Rebecca Williams	rwilliams@ncbfs.org
Preneed Services Specialist	Phyllecia Townsend-Banks	ptownsend-banks@ncbfs.org

COMPLIANCE AND INSPECTIONS TEAM: ON-CALL SCHEDULE

Monday	Brett Lisenbee	(919) 218-8083
Tuesday	Darrell Cagle	(919) 604-4828
Wednesday	Chris Stoessner	(919) 215-8851
Thursday	Karen Davis-Brunson	(919) 219-8701
Friday	Terri Robinson-McLean	(919) 410-4608

You will recall that we have suspended on-site inspections of licensed establishments through the end of March. Please direct your calls on the Coronavirus and related concerns to the inspector who serves your particular county. You'll find a listing of the counties by region and the appropriate inspector to call at www.ncbfs.org/licensee-resources/compliance-inspectors/.

Board staff appreciates your questions and acknowledges your concerns. If you have other questions or suggestions for additional topics associated with the COVID-19 crisis, please let us know by email. The Board office is closed to the public through the end of March, and staff are working on a stay-at-home basis by teleworking.

Email is a preferred method for letting us know your questions and concerns.

Thank you again for your critical role in assuring professional funeral service to those who rely upon us for guidance during this public health crisis.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT [PPE]

Board staff have heard from several licensees concerns about the supply and availability of PPE given the increasing demands for this equipment particularly in hospitals and other clinical settings. One of the reasons for seeking the Governor's recognition of funeral professions as "essential services" in declarations of "stay-at-home" orders is to enable priority access to PPE and other funeral-related supplies.

Other than making the Governor aware of this issue, Board staff are not involved in issues pertaining to the supply, stockpiling or distribution of such equipment. Those issues are decided and determined by federal, state and local officials.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE VIRUS' IMPACT ON FUNERAL PROFESSIONS

In recent days, you may have noticed increased media coverage on how funeral homes and licensees are coping with restrictions on public gatherings and other concerns associated with COVID-19. Following are some of the outlets that have been in contact with the Board:

- The Raleigh News & Observer
- WRAL-TV - Raleigh Metro
- WTVD-TV Raleigh Metro
- The Winston-Salem Journal

Several newspapers across the state have circulated articles in the past week regarding the many ways that the Coronavirus is changing the traditions and customs associated with funeral planning and service. A quick Google search using the terms "Coronavirus Impact Funeral Profession" will bring up many of these articles from local and national press in describing how funeral homes and families are coping with the restrictions imposed to assure social distancing.