

COVID-19 update

Funerals and reducing the spread of COVID-19

It can be a difficult time when you have lost a friend or loved one. Planning a funeral can be overwhelming, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak.

If you are planning a funeral, this information can help you understand the current restrictions in place that will affect funeral arrangements.

New restrictions on the attendance of people at funerals

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the State Government has introduced new provisions to prohibit certain activities and limit the number of people who can attend a funeral.

Under the new provisions, no more than 10 people can attend a funeral. People who are needed to conduct the funeral, such as the funeral director and the funeral celebrant, are not included as part of the 10-person limit. Penalties apply if this limit is not followed.

It can be a difficult task to limit the number of people who can attend the funeral of your loved one. However, it is important to understand that these measures have been introduced to protect your health and well-being and to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

For more information on these new provisions, visit the [WA Government website](#)

Exemptions from the 10-person limit

A person can apply for an approval to allow more than 10 people to attend a funeral, but only where all people considered (counted) are *immediate family members*.

An immediate family member means only the partner or spouse (including de facto), parents, siblings and children (including stepchildren) of the deceased.

Close friends of the deceased, extended family members and other people who are not immediate family, will not be able to attend the funeral if the 10-person limit is reached, even if the exemption approval is granted.

It is highly recommended that you seek the advice of your funeral director and discuss the implications of having more than 10 people attend the funeral.

New provisions requiring people to observe social distancing may make it difficult to accommodate a funeral with more than 10 people. The funeral may need to be held outside or in a larger venue. More information on the social distancing requirements is provided below.

To apply for an exemption approval, an application must:

- be made as early as possible;
- be addressed to Department of Health, Emergency Officer;
- be sent via email to OADG.PAHD@health.wa.gov.au

If an approval is granted, it is important for everyone's health and safety that the limit of people specified in the approval is not exceeded. If the limit of people in the approval is exceeded, the cemetery or funeral director may not be able to undertake the funeral in accordance with current requirements. This will create additional stress for everyone involved.

For more information, visit the [WA Government website](#)

Social distancing requirements

New social distancing requirements introduced by the State Government apply to the gathering of people at cemeteries and funerals. This may impact where the funeral of your loved one can be held. It is important that you discuss your options with the funeral director to ensure you comply with these requirements.

For more information on social distancing requirements, visit:

- WA Government website – [COVID-19 coronavirus update stage 3](#)
- WA Government website – [Prohibited gatherings direction](#)

Travelling to funerals

The State Government has introduced restrictions on travel into and within Western Australia to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Travelling into Western Australia and travelling between the different regions of Western Australia has been prohibited, except in certain circumstances.

A person travelling to Western Australia or is travelling between different regions in Western Australia to attend a funeral, can be exempt from the travel restrictions on compassionate grounds.

For more information on these travel restrictions, visit the [WA Government website](#)

Involving everyone in the funeral

A funeral is important in working through the grief in the loss of a loved one. There are ways to still include everyone in a funeral, even if they cannot attend in person:

- consider live streaming the service;
- have loved ones send video messages to be screened at the funeral;
- consider having written messages of support shared at the funeral;
- record the funeral and create a video to share with others;
- ask friends and family to stop for a moment of remembrance at a specific date and time.

It is important that everyone has an opportunity to express their grief and share in supporting one another through this difficult time.

Planning a memorial at a later date

One option to consider is planning a memorial for your loved one at a later date when there is no longer a pandemic and restrictions on gatherings. This will allow you to celebrate and

reflect on the life of your loved one with all the people they shared a connection with.

A memorial can be held at the cemetery, or at another location that has significant meaning to your loved one and will provide an opportunity for all of those who wish to pay their respects to do so.

More information

It is important to note that the State Government is making continual changes as the State Emergency unfolds.

We recommend that you visit the State Government's website to keep up to date with additional changes. Visit the [WA Government website](#)