
The Funeral Directors Association of Kentucky, Inc.

FDAK Statement on COVID-19 and Kentucky Funeral Service

March 16, 2020

Dear FDAK Member Funeral Home:

As you know, these are some very trying times here in Kentucky and throughout the entire world. We are facing issues that most of us have never faced before in our lifetimes. With that being said, we all are going to be called on to make some sacrifices to the way we operate our business during these most uncertain days/months ahead.

As of today (Monday, March 16, 2020), Kentucky has 21 confirmed cases of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) within its boundaries, with many more individuals having been tested. This number will most likely continue to rise. States of Emergency has been declared in Kentucky and in the United States as a whole.

Governor Beshear stated “We are asking people to make major sacrifices in this state” and he has done just that by taking several steps to lessen the spread of the virus in our Commonwealth which include:

- Closure of all Senior Centers
- State Boards and Commission to cancel all in-person meetings
- Shutting down all school systems in the state
- Closing all restaurants and bars
- Child Care Centers to be closed
- Closing the State Capitol Building
- And **advising** that **ALL Community Gatherings be canceled** (including funerals, which he mentioned in his Friday, March 13th Press Conference)

On Sunday, March 15, 2020 the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) made the following recommendation:

Large events and mass gatherings can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in the United States via travelers who attend these events and introduce the virus to new communities. Examples of large events and mass gatherings include conferences, festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, weddings, and other types of assemblies. These events can be planned not only by organizations and communities but also by individuals.

*Therefore, CDC, in accordance with its guidance for [large events and mass gatherings](#), recommends that for the **next 8 weeks**, organizers (whether groups or individuals) **cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States.***

This recommendation is made in an attempt to reduce introduction of the virus into new communities and to slow the spread of infection in communities already affected by the virus. This recommendation is not intended to supersede the advice of local public health officials.

We know that the funeral homes in our state are looking to their state and national Governments as well as their state and national associations for direction regarding what to do during this time. At this point, there are **NO State or Federal MANDATES** on “**public meetings**” just recommendations, but that could very well change if we do not adhere to the recommendations as set forth.

[Each Funeral Home in Kentucky will need to make the conscious choice as to how they will conduct business over the coming weeks. FDAK would advise you to take a very close look at the State and Federal Recommendations when deciding on how you will proceed in your daily business operations.](#)

If you choose to continue to conduct funerals on a daily basis or pursue limited operations, we would recommend that you take all of the necessary precautions to minimize the immediate threat to those attending the services as well as your funeral home staff.

- Have the conversation with your families about having a “private family gathering” and possibly a public memorial at a later date. If you do this, you will need to note that in the obituary so the public knows that it is a private service
- Limiting the attendance at services to less than 50 individuals
- Encourage those individuals who are most vulnerable (the elderly, and adults over 60 who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease etc.) to not attend the services
- Encourage those at the service to strict “social distancing” maintaining a 6 foot perimeter
- Closing your lounges/kitchens with no coffee or food service
- Have as much hand sanitizer available as possible
- And we would encourage you to have Appropriate Signage in the funeral home stating something to the effect of: *To protect the wellness of the families that we serve and our funeral home staff we recommend that you refrain from shaking hands, hugging, kissing and maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet*

Yes, we know that these measures are extreme but to protect the families that we serve and to protect your employees and the public as a whole, extreme measures are needed. We all have to do our part. Kentucky Department for Public Health, Dr. Steven Stack stated “*If we reduce our social contact with each other by about 25% the infection line drops dramatically, and if we do not contact each other at all you don’t have an epidemic.*”

Recommendations/Strategies are changing daily, if not hourly, but FDAK is committed to keeping you as up-to-date on all COVID-19 matters as possible. Please feel free to contact us at any time about the matters herein discussed at (1-800-866-3211). We are always here for you as members of this Association.

Governor Beshear said and we agree “*We are all in this together. We are going to get through this together. We are all on one team-Team Kentucky. This is a big test for Team Kentucky. This is us against the coronavirus and all we need from people is to be really good teammates and understand we all have to follow these guidelines and we all have to go through this disruption over the coming weeks.*” Visit <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/pages/covid19.aspx> for more information.

God Bless and Keep you all!

Sincerely,



Rob Riley
President



Sidney Fogle
Executive Director

P.S. We are enclosing a Press Release from the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and the Kentucky Medical Association for further information.

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FDAK: THE VOICE OF FUNERAL SERVICE IN THE COMMONWEALTH



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