



Governor Doug A Ducey

April 2, 2020

Dear Funeral Colleagues,

The last few weeks have been an unprecedented time in our country, filled with anxiety and uncertainty, along with a never-ending flow of information. As the Coronavirus pandemic (“COVID-19”), progresses in Arizona and surrounding areas, information has been evolving faster at times than it can be disseminated. The Center for Disease Control (“CDC”) has recommended maintaining social distancing and avoiding gatherings of 10 or more. To date, the State of Arizona has not issued an Order to mandate this. I recognize the struggle it can be trying to assist a family when a death has occurred in addition to doing all you can to follow the guidance set forth by the CDC. This is the time for Funeral Directors to do what you have been trained to do, which is “direct” the families you serve through a time fraught with more difficulties than ever before.

It is the fundamental responsibility of every citizen to do his or her part to help suppress the spread of this virus. Professionally, you also have a multi-point duty of care. This duty of care, which is consistent with state laws and regulations, is equally as critical to public health and welfare; reverent, dignified care of the deceased; and compassion to those who grieve. This is a responsibility that each of you are well versed in. While we are passionate for our own personal causes, we must yield to commonsense and the greater public welfare in the application of our duties. I applaud those industry members who have made extraordinary efforts to change their normal practice while continuing to serve families.

The public has been given extensive information and recommendations regarding the need to avoid group assemblies. There are many options to consider that give you the ability to serve a family without a public gathering. If you and the family you are caring for decide to have a public funeral gathering, please take the necessary precautions that you are not engaging in conduct that could lead to the spread of COVID-19. I do not have the authority to tell you, you cannot have a gathering; however, I would plead with you to consider possible ramifications that could result if you continue to allow families to gather. These are serious times and require thoughtful actions by all.

“To Maintain and enforce a set of standards that provides protection for the health, safety and welfare of Arizona citizens by educating the consumer and by actively and impartially regulating those licensed to provide funeral goods and services”.

If a family is insistent on gathering for an arrangement conference, consider using technology to minimize or eliminate any gathering of people at your location. Zoom, Skype/FaceTime and Facebook Live, are all examples of free tools that can be used to eliminate potential contact with the public. Please refer to the links posted on the Board webpage for up to date information and best practice information. <https://funeralboard.az.gov/> I am receiving feedback of funeral workers being exposed unnecessarily to family members of confirmed COVID-19 decedents. In many cases, these are the same individuals who then go out to hospitals, care centers, homes, etc. to pick up other decedents thereby potentially exposing an unknown number of people.

Board staff are committed to help you in any way we can to stay informed and prepared as this situation continues to evolve in the coming weeks. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with your questions, concerns or to share updates that may benefit other industry members. Additionally, thank you for both checking and responding to email communications sent from Board staff.

Thank you for all you do. The funeral industry will likely remain the unsung heroes amid the chaos. Please know how important and valued you are for your vigilant service and integrity as you do all in your power to keep safe you, your employees and the families you willingly serve.

Respectfully,

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Executive Director

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