



# COVID-19 update

## Funerals and reducing the spread of COVID-19 (Phase 3 Easing of Restrictions – commencing 6 June 2020).

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 100 people can attend a funeral held indoors; or
- no more than 300 people can attend a funeral outdoors.

People who are needed to conduct the funeral, such as the funeral director and the funeral celebrant, are not generally included as part of these limits (unless in a small indoor or outdoor venue and impacted by prohibited gathering requirements). Penalties apply if these limits are not followed.

All attendees are required to comply with physical distancing requirements (2 square metres per person).

It can be a difficult task to limit the number of attendees at 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.

Funeral Directors or those conducting the funeral are required to keep an attendance record of all attendees for (potential) contact tracing.

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

### **Exemptions from the attendee limits**

A person can apply for an approval to allow more than 100 people to attend a funeral held indoors or 300 people to attend a funeral held outdoors.

It is highly recommended that you seek the advice of your funeral director and discuss the implications of having more than the allowable number of attendees at the funeral.

Provisions requiring people to observe physical distancing may make it difficult to accommodate a funeral with the maximum or more than the allowable number of people. More information on the physical distancing requirements is provided below.

To apply for an exemption approval, an applicant is required to:

- make an application as early as possible;
- complete the application form available on the [department's website](#);
- send the application via email to [funeral.exemption@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:funeral.exemption@dlgsc.wa.gov.au).

Irrespective of any exemption approval, the physical distancing requirements for each person present at the funeral must still be adhered to.

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 on Community Activities such as funerals, visit the [WA Government website](#).

### **Physical distancing requirements**

New physical 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 physical distancing requirements, visit the [WA Government website](#).

### **Travelling to funerals**

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

Travelling into Western Australia and Aboriginal communities is prohibited, except in certain circumstances.

A person travelling to Western Australia or into a remote community to attend a funeral, may 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;
- organise a drive by whereby family and friends can responsibly distance themselves along a street as a funeral procession drives by.

Another appropriate option may be to hold multiple funerals with the maximum number of attendees at each funeral.

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](#).