

# GUIDANCE FOR WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

## Overview

Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Order 25-2020 requires businesses and entities to:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene;
- comply, to the extent possible, with any applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: [alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx](http://alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx).

Where any part of this guidance is inconsistent or in conflict with enhanced or stronger public health restrictions set out in another CMOH Order, the enhanced or stronger public health measures would prevail. Operators/organizers are also required to follow the [General Operational Guidance](#) and any other applicable CMOH orders.

This document has been developed to support planners/operators/organizers of wedding ceremonies, funeral services, and wedding and funeral receptions in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among attendees (including couples, family, friends, other invited guests, officiants, event staff, facility staff, volunteers, and the general public). The guidance provided outlines public health and infection prevention and control requirements specific to these settings and activities.

### This guidance applies in all areas of Alberta.

In all settings, it is important that measures are implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to ensuring: physical distancing, barrier use (where appropriate), proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, records management and building maintenance (e.g., ventilation).

## COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

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| <b>Wedding Ceremonies</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Up to <b>20</b> individuals can attend an indoor or outdoor wedding ceremony, so long as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The marrying couple, officiant, witnesses, photographers, videographer, and any audience members are counted towards the capacity limit.</li><li>○ Facility staff and event organizers who are not considered to be invited guests are not counted towards the capacity limit.</li><li>○ This limit applies if the ceremony is standing or seated.</li></ul></li><li>• Filming or broadcasting of a wedding ceremony is permitted. If the person(s) filming are not employees of the facility or event organizer, they must be counted as part of the 20 attendees.</li></ul> |
| <b>Funeral Services</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Up to <b>20</b> individuals can attend an indoor or outdoor funeral service, so long as:</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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|                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Family members, friends, and all other invited guests are counted towards the capacity limit.</li> <li>○ This limit applies whether funeral attendees are standing or seated.</li> <li>○ Funeral service and facility staff, funeral clergy and event organizers who are not considered to be invited guests are not counted toward the capacity limit of 20 individuals.</li> <li>● Filming or broadcasting of a funeral service is permitted. If the person(s) filming are not employees of the funeral home or venue, they must be counted as part of the 20 attendees.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>General Advice for Wedding and Funeral Organizers</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All venues used for a wedding or funeral must follow the <a href="#">General Operational Guidance</a>.</li> <li>● All participants, including attendees, staff and officiants, must wear masks in all indoor public areas and workplaces in the wedding or funeral venue.</li> <li>● Physical distancing of 2 metres is required between members of different households at all times.</li> <li>● Operators should place hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol in convenient locations throughout the venue.</li> <li>● Operators must remind attendees to screen themselves for symptoms using the <a href="#">Alberta Health Daily Checklist</a> before attending the ceremony or service.</li> <li>● Operators must have plans for a rapid response if an attendee becomes symptomatic while at the event location. For more information on what this must include, see the <a href="#">General Operational Guidance</a>.</li> <li>● Operators must follow cleaning and disinfecting practices described in the COVID-19 <a href="#">General Operational Guidance</a>.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Receptions for Weddings and Funerals</b></p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Indoor wedding and funeral receptions are not permitted in this Stage.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Receptions cannot take place at a restaurant patio.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Outdoor wedding and funeral receptions are permitted with up to 20 people.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There can be no indoor components to these events except washrooms.</li> <li>○ Attendees must maintain 2 metres' distance at all times from people who are not part of their household.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Organizers serving food must follow the <a href="#">Food Service and Sales Guidance</a>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Performances</b></p>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organizers may be able to offer live performances as part of a wedding or funeral ceremony or reception so long as they follow the <a href="#">Guidance for Performing Arts</a>.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Performers are not counted towards the attendance limits at weddings or funerals unless they are invited guests.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Pallbearing and Handling the Deceased</b></p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where possible, operators/organizers should minimize or avoid the use of pallbearers.</li> <li>● If pallbearing is required or specifically requested by the family or community, operators/organizers must ensure that pallbearers mask at all</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|                               | <p>times while pallbearing, even if outdoors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the family determines that touching the deceased is an essential part of the funeral or bereavement event, it can be permitted as long as the operator or funeral organizer:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Provides hand sanitizer or soap and running, potable water;</li><li>○ Prevents individuals from kissing, or pressing their faces to the deceased, their clothing, or the coffin; and</li><li>○ Instructs attendees to wash or sanitize their hands thoroughly after touching the deceased, their clothing, or the coffin.</li></ul></li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Preparing the Deceased</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People who have died from COVID-19 may be buried or cremated.</li><li>• Operators/organizers must minimize the opportunities for non-licensed persons such as religious or cultural groups, family or friends, to handle the body, especially in cases where the deceased person is a known or suspected case of COVID-19.</li><li>• For more information on best practices for funeral homes and other professionals that will be handling and preparing the body, review Alberta Health Service's <a href="#">COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Handling of Deceased Persons</a>.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Physical Distancing</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although it is natural to want to come together at these events, operators/organizers must ask attendees not to hug or touch people who are not part of their household.</li><li>• Operators/organizers must ensure that religious or spiritual rituals that involve physical contact between individuals are postponed or performed in a way that does not involve physical contact.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Touching Shared Items</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendees must not to pass items between them (e.g. tissues, gifts, or belongings), unless it is between members of the same household.</li><li>• If required for personal, cultural, spiritual, or other reasons, touching of ceremonial objects (e.g. statues, religious symbols, rings) may occur if hand hygiene is practiced immediately after touching the object.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The operator/organizer must prevent individuals from kissing, or pressing their faces on any shared ceremonial object.</li></ul></li><li>• Attendees should be discouraged from handing gifts, cards, money, or other items directly to the recipients, family, or staff as this could prevent physical distancing. Encourage online donations, gifts or registries.</li></ul> |

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed.

Last Revised: June 2021