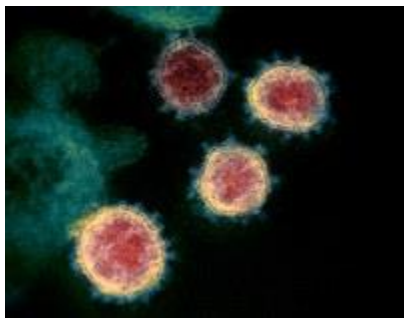


COVID-19 Virus and Funerals



A Public Service Message

Johnson-Danielson Funeral Home

This is a changing situation nearly by the hour. However, we are getting questions and concerns from the public and our families regarding the current virus situation. The reason that we, as funeral directors, are licensed and regulated is for exactly this reason. We are well-trained and well-informed in epidemiology and infection control and are employing every precaution necessary for the protection of public health as we receive daily updates from the Indiana Funeral Directors Association, National Funeral Directors Association and other organizations we belong to, who are in direct communication with the C.D.C., the W.H.O, O.S.H.A. and the Department of Labor and other regulatory agencies. We are including some of the FAQs we're getting here, but feel free to call our licensed funeral directors with any other concerns or questions.

Is it safe to have or attend funerals, visitations or other services?

If you are elderly or have compromised health or immunity, you have been advised to avoid social contact and it would be wise to follow the guidelines that are already well known. If you are otherwise healthy you should employ proper handwashing, avoid cross-contamination (handling items that may be contaminated—money, pens, doorknobs, etc.) and keeping a reasonable distance from others in social situation (i.e. avoid hugging, kissing, handshaking). These are good practices during every normal flu season and we encourage prudence and good judgement. **Wash hands thoroughly and often!**

Our funeral home location is cleaned after every single visitation year-round. This includes chapels, coffee lounges, restrooms and public areas. We have hand sanitizer as always. We use hospital grade disinfectants even in the chapels, cleaning chairs after every service, Ozone air purification is used as well as aerosol disinfectants. During this difficult time, we are reminding our guests to avoid physical contact. Register book stands and pens are being wiped continually (and we encourage you to use your own pen when signing any document in a public place). Our staff is also happy to sign the book for you.

Won't large funerals spread the disease?

Funerals today rarely attract random strangers, distant acquaintances or large crowds unless the death was unusually tragic or sudden. At this time, public gatherings of more than 50 people are being discouraged by the CDC and this is a situation that may become a required limitation and

if so, we will follow those restrictions. Those attending your funeral or memorial service will likely be your own family and close friends. In some cases, this may cause concern, but in most cases, you probably are aware of the guests' health situations. If family members must travel commercially to attend, obviously some additional caution in the above areas is warranted.

What options do we have if a death has occurred?

If a family is apprehensive about an open public event, there are options. A service tailored to the family's situation and desires is always what we strive to provide. Services can be delayed until such time as the crisis subsides. Services may be private or by invitation only. With the permission of the immediate family, services will be recorded and presented to the family for distribution.

Must we have an immediate burial or cremation?

There is no reason not to have an open casket visitation, EVEN IF the person died of the virus. At this time, there is no legal or practical necessity for unusual disposition practices as are being reported overseas. With some serious diseases, this has and could occur. Over the years, our funeral home and staff have dealt with many diseases that threatened public health. Annual flu deaths in the U.S. are significant each year. Keeping numbers in perspective will help counteract the anxiety and panic being spread in the media.

Our care center, embalmers and protocols are designed to deal with contagious diseases. Our ventilation systems are designed to separate the care center air from that of the rest of the building. Proper embalming is designed to make the body safe for public viewing. Grieving, honoring the body and saying good-bye to a loved one are important and necessary. Death is rarely convenient and the current situation, while requiring flexibility, should not prevent families from meeting their immediate needs in this regard.

“There is no known risk associated with being in the same room at a funeral or visitation with the embalmed body of someone who died of COVID-19 as the virus spreads when the infected person exhales or sneezes infected droplets” (C.D.C.statement of 3/12). However, because we are still learning about the spread of this disease, we do advise families not to touch, kiss or handle the remains if COVID-19 is suspected.

Can we view the body if it is not embalmed?

We typically allow and encourage direct cremation families to have an un-embalmed viewing or I.D. prior to cremation for the immediate family members. Due to the current situation, we are suspending this practice temporarily for the protection of family members, other visitors to the facilities and our staff members. All viewing must be preceded by embalming and disinfection until the COVID-19 situation abates. Embalming can only be performed with permission of the next-of-kin.

We hope that this current information will help provide some calm to the concerns of our community as we face this global situation in support of each other.