
On June 4, 2021, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order No. 244 ending the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency in New Jersey. Many of the Governor's executive orders that relied on the existence of the Public Health Emergency expired as of July 4, 2021; however, certain executive orders remain in effect until January 1, 2022, and administrative directives, orders, and waivers remain effective until January 11, 2022, unless further extended.

The State of Emergency declared in March 2020 remains in effect to continue the State's response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Division of Consumer Affairs greatly appreciates the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by licensees during the unprecedented increase in the demand for funeral and final disposition services in the State.

COVID-19 COMMUNICATION FOR NEW JERSEY CEMETERIES AND MORTUARIES – OCTOBER 2021

The New Jersey Cemetery and Mortuary Science Boards together issue this communication to encourage licensees to continue the practices developed during the past 19 months which have enabled the State to respond to the pandemic.

Anticipate and Address Potential Delays

Safely extend operation hours as needed. To prevent backups from developing in the post-mortem management system (mortuaries, cemeteries, and crematories) licensees should continue to safely maximize hours of operation when necessary. If regional delays develop anywhere in the system, licensees are urged to utilize service providers in lesser-impacted regions of the State whenever possible.

Avoid accumulation of remains on site. Mortuaries must adopt all proper means and methods to safeguard public health and the dignity of decedents in their care. Preparation of remains must be performed in private; prepared remains should not be housed in public areas of a mortuary prior to funeral services. Board regulations permit remains to be housed in non-public areas of mortuaries when necessary so long as public health and decedent dignity are maintained.

Importantly, licensees must not exceed their individual capacity to hold remains in compliance with their respective Board's regulations.

A mortuary or crematory approaching capacity should immediately contact its respective Board, the New Jersey Office of the Chief State Medical Examiner (OCSME), or its county Office of Emergency Management (OEM) for guidance and assistance.

Any facility with capacity concerns should not hesitate to contact Bryan Hoffman, Mass Fatality Coordinator at OCSME at 973-407-9115, Bryan.Hoffmann@doh.nj.gov.

Reduce Transmission Risk

Transmission mitigation measures such as face coverings, social distancing, and gathering limits are not currently mandatory across most New Jersey businesses and facilities. But to reduce transmission, [New Jersey strongly recommends](#) that

unvaccinated *and* vaccinated residents *wear masks indoors in higher-risk settings*, such as in crowds or anywhere unvaccinated individuals may be present.

Employers and facilities are encouraged to implement mitigation measures, including requiring masking and social distancing, consistent with the recommendations of the State (which can be found [here](#)) and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (which can be found [here](#)).

Vaccinate. Everyone 12 years or older who lives, works, or studies in New Jersey is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Learn more about vaccination and how to make an appointment at the New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub [here](#).

Status of Orders and Waivers

Executive Order 112 will remain in effect until January 1, 2022, unless modified. The other administrative orders below will remain in effect until January 11, 2022, unless modified or extended. Please check for updates to these documents on the State's Executive Order homepage [here](#) and the Division's COVID homepage [here](#).

[EO 112](#) – Waives written signature requirements for prepaid funeral agreements and authorization to commence funeral services; permits electronic signatures.

[DCA-AO-2020-02](#) – Waives rules that require licensees of the Board of Mortuary Science to obtain written authorization from an individual with the right to control those human remains prior to final disposition or embalming.

[DCA-AO-2020-04/DCA-W-2020-07](#) – Modifies rule requiring presence of a licensed mortuary practitioner at the time of final disposition of human remains; permits interns registered with Board of Mortuary Science to be present in lieu of a licensee.

[DCA-W-2020-04](#) – Waives in-person attendance requirement for certain continuing education credit hours.

DOH [ED-2020-10](#) (revised August 2020) – Disposition of Remains. Relaxed earlier restrictions on funerals and final disposition.