

METRO HISTORIC CEMETERIES PROGRAM'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

UPDATED ON MARCH 27, 2020

Dear funeral home partners,

The Metro Historic Cemeteries Program wants to provide you with an update on the program's response to COVID-19. We continue to operate, with the understanding that this is an evolving situation and things could change again rapidly. In that case, we will communicate with you as soon as possible.

As you know, Metro is continuing to work closely with the Oregon Health Authority and local public health agencies. The health and safety of our employees and our community is our top priority. We are all navigating through an unprecedented situation, and we will work together to ensure we reduce impacts on employees and our community during the COVID-19 response.

We want to share with you the changes we have made since our March 19, 2020 letter. Governor Kate Brown has enacted the "Stay home, Save Lives" executive order, and we are making changes to further ensure the safety of our staff and the families we serve:

- We are no longer accepting cash payments for any purchases. We will accept credit cards, cashier's checks, personal checks or money orders only.
- For the safety of our staff and the digging crew, we are no longer providing the option of a graveside service. For casketed burials, the cemetery staff, digging crew and funeral home staff will place the casket onto the casket liner and the digging crew will immediately lower the liner into the ground.
- For urn burials, one family member may place the urn at the burial site or in the urn liner and cemetery staff will complete the burial once the family member has stepped back into their car.
- If family members would like to witness the lowering of the casket or the closing of the grave, they may do so from their vehicles. We will allow a maximum of five (5) vehicles near the gravesite. Please note that in some cemeteries the view of the grave site from a vehicle could be obstructed or not possible.

Otherwise, we will continue to operate as it was outlined in our March 19, 2020 letter:

- We remain open and available to help you. You can reach us at 503-797-1709 or cemetery@oregonmetro.gov. Please know that our staff is working remotely as much as possible, so leave a voicemail or send us an email, and we will respond as quickly as possible.
- We continue to respond to calls when a death occurs in a timely, compassionate and professional manner, so please leave a message or send an email and we will contact you as soon as possible.



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- We are communicating with families to make cemetery and burial arrangements primarily via phone or email, limiting in-person meetings as much as possible. We also ask that families limit the number of people at the arrangement conference to no more than two (2) family members so we can maintain the required social distancing of six (6) feet.

We understand that these changes will be difficult and we appreciate the trust that you place in us. We invite family members back to visit the grave and place flowers after the burial has been completed, and to observe the required social distancing measures. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and take actions necessary to help keep our staff and our community safe while providing the services you need during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

The Metro Historic Cemeteries team