

May 21, 2020

Dear members of the public and Metro partners,

The Metro Historic Cemeteries Program wants to provide you with an update on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 that we reduce impacts on employees and our community during this public health crisis.

We'd like to share with you the changes we have made to our policies and procedures. In order to do our part to help keep our community, staff and the families we serve safe, we are making these changes:

- At this time, we will no longer be able to meet with families in person to make arrangements.

The changes we outlined in our March 27, 2020 letter remain in place:

- 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. At this time, we are not allowing caskets to be open for any part of the burial service.
- 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.

- 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 are working remotely as much as possible, so leave a detailed 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.
- We are communicating with families to make cemetery and burial arrangements solely via phone or email. This is in order to limit in-person meetings as much as possible, and reserve these interactions for burials.

We understand that these changes are 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 physical 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