



ANISHINABEK NATION

FUNERAL PROTOCOL

PURPOSE

To develop a Funeral Protocol that will assist Anishinabek First Nations with managing funerals within their respective communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This protocol is not meant to replace any existing First Nation protocols. This protocol should serve as a resource/guide for those First Nations who do not have any protocols currently in place.

CURRENT SITUATION

Several Anishinabek First Nations have already declared a “State of Emergency” as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. During this Pandemic, First Nations are having to deal with the loss of members, whether it be COVID-19 related or not. Given the current social distancing requirements in place, funerals have become challenging.

ANISHINABEK NATION FUNERAL PROTOCOLS - DURING COVID -19

Traditional and Western Funeral Practices

The Anishinabek Nation acknowledges that each of our member First Nations have their own Traditional and Western funeral practices that they abide by, in normal circumstances.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic we must seek new and innovative ways to adapt our Traditional and Western funeral practices to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

Spiritual Practices

It is important to acknowledge the spiritual journey of those that pass on and enter the spirit world by continuing our traditional practices.

Traditional practices can be performed or offered by individuals, while still maintaining physical distancing.

Mass Gathering Cancellation

Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, Doctor David Williams, by order, has put in place directives to ban/limit public gatherings, including funerals. These apply to such things as wedding and funerals that restrict the number of grievers to ten (10) people, until further notice.

Interaction with people contribute to the transmission of respiratory illnesses such as COVID -19. Elders and/or individuals with pre-existing conditions are most at risk for poor outcomes



ANISHINABEK NATION

DIFFICULT TIMES—DIFFICULT DECISIONS

The Anishinabek Nation acknowledges that these are difficult times, and funerals during these times are even more traumatic.

To prevent the spread of the virus amongst our member First Nations, and keep our citizens safe, the following guidelines are recommended:

Proceeding with w Funeral during COVID-19

1. # Of People/Physical Distancing

The Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health, has provided direction that funeral gathering be limited to ten (10) grievors. All those in attendance must practise physical distancing of two meters, (6 feet). People living together in the same house may interact closely with their fellow inhabitants of the same house ONLY at such gatherings.

2. Those Attending The Funeral Should Not:

- Be sick or have been in contact with someone who was/is sick;
- Have travelled outside of Canada in the last fourteen (14) days; and
- Should not reside with an Elder or someone with significant chronic disease, or with children.

It is also recommended that in order to reduce the number of people travelling to attend a funeral, that only immediate family members or local First Nation individuals, be allowed to attend a funeral.

3. Avoid Contact

- Do not hug, shake hands, or have any physical contact with anyone;
- Stay six (6) feet away from the nearest person;
- Do not touch your face;
- Cough into the bend of your elbow or tissue.
- Dispose of used tissues into a lined waste basket, followed by proper hand washing. If hand washing stations are not readily available, please use a hand sanitizer solution.

4. Public Area Disinfection

For those responsible for limiting the number of people in attendance and handling other facets of the funeral arrangements, you must ensure that ALL public areas, (kitchens, bathrooms, common areas), are disinfected prior/after/throughout the day. These areas should be disinfected utilizing 1:50 bleach disinfectant solutions or other similar commercially prepared solutions.

Special attention for these practices should be paid to the most commonly touched surfaces, such as railings, counter surfaces, etc.



ANISHINABEK NATION

5. Plan For Those That Become Sick On Site

Ensure that Personal Protective Equipment, (PPE) is available onsite, in case someone becomes ill while attending the service. Have a plan to move them to a designated isolation area to prevent any possible transmission of the COVID-19 Virus.

6. Hygiene Stations

Have clearly marked hand wash/ hand sanitizer stations available at the entrances, as well as lined waste baskets in close proximity to these stations. Ensure that there is an adequate supply of hand soap, paper towel, and lined waste baskets in bathrooms etc.

7. Mourning Time

While local traditions may vary, funerals often last over a period of several days. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, we respectfully request that funeral services be limited to one day.

8. Funeral Location

Wherever and whenever possible, funerals should be conducted outdoors as there is a higher level of natural ventilation, and greater capacity for physical distancing between/amongst attendees.

9. Cleaning The Body

The Anishinabek Nation recognizes that this is a Traditional practice, however, it is recommended that this Traditional practice does not take place if there is either confirmation of, or suspicion that, the deceased passed away as the result of being infected with the COVID-19 virus.

10. Viewing

Viewing of the body during the COVID-19 Pandemic is not recommended unless strict and onsite monitoring/facilitating of the physical distancing protocol can be enforced.

11. No Feast/Food

An offering of food, water, and tobacco should replace the historical practice of a community feast.

12. Communication

Ensure that all those directly involved in making funeral arrangements, and all those citizens planning on attending the funeral services, are made aware of the First Nations COVID-19 Pandemic protocols/precautions. The rationale for these protocols must also be clearly communicated to all citizens in order to ensure the safety of everyone, reduce the potential for the spread of the COVID -19 Virus, and prevent any misunderstandings during these stressful times.



ANISHINABEK NATION

13. Funeral Options

(A) Spiritual Practices

With physical distancing measures in place, and/or as individuals, spiritual practices may be performed, such as smudging, cleansing the home, fire keeping in shifts, (for the day), offering prayers, drumming/singing individually, connecting with Elders via telephone, and/or offering medicines to the fire, or water.

(B) Cremation

While cremation may not be a common practice, cremation is encouraged during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

(C) Streaming The Ceremony

First Nations are encouraged to utilize technology to live stream portions of the funeral services. This would allow the extended families of the deceased, and members of the First Nation to watch the proceedings from the safety of their own homes.

(D) Future Ceremony

Once the provincial ban on public gatherings has been lifted, and it is safe once again to do so, a traditional funeral service can be carried out.