

New Procedures at VA National Cemeteries due to COVID-19

Dear Funeral Directors:

All Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemeteries are open and will continue to provide interments for Veterans and eligible individuals. However, the National Cemetery Administration is continuing to adjust its services in light of the [best practices urged by the CDC](#) in response to the COVID-19 epidemic. As a result, on Friday, March 20, **NCA will only conduct committal services at our 142 cemeteries nationwide for groups of 10 or fewer people.** Larger groups will be asked to reduce their numbers or be refused service. We appreciate your continued support in communicating and reinforcing this direction.

In addition, families should know that volunteer veterans honor guards may no longer be providing services at all cemeteries.

Starting March 23, 2020, as a matter of public health and safety, committal services and the rendering of military funeral honors, whether by military personnel or volunteer organizations, will not be conducted until further notice at VA national cemeteries. Immediate family members (limited to no more than 10 individuals) of the deceased may choose to witness the interment if desired. There is no service involved with witnessing an interment. Families will be able to view the interment of their loved one from a safe distance.

We are asking for your assistance in communicating the changes in operations to families that have interments scheduled and contact honors providers to cancel their services. Please contact the national cemetery where the interment is scheduled as soon as possible if the family wishes to postpone the interment. NCA will work to schedule a committal or memorial services at a later date for those families that choose to continue with the direct interment or postpone the interment.

The National Cemetery Scheduling Office in St. Louis will continue to provide scheduling services for the duration of the current emergency. To schedule a burial, please call 800-535-1117, option 1.

Our cemeteries will remain open to visitors, but we strongly urge all guests to obey local travel restrictions and avoid unnecessary travel. Visitors should expect that certain portions of a cemetery typically open to the public may be closed (for example, public information centers, chapels). Please contact the local cemetery for more information.

As warranted, NCA will provide updates on the operating status of individual national cemeteries on our social media

pages: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalCemeteries> and <https://twitter.com/VANatCemeteries>

For more information about the government's response to COVID-19 please visit: <https://www.coronavirus.gov>