



Managing the Deceased During a Pandemic

The Cabinet Office has released an updated version of their guidance – **Managing the Deceased During a Pandemic**.

This is an updated version of the original general guidance published in 2008. It was, however, drafted before the Coronavirus Act gained Royal Assent last month. Consequently, a number of the potential measures referenced in this guidance have since come into effect via Commencement Orders. It should therefore be read alongside the guidance published in support of those specific measures now in effect and other recent guidance specific to COVID-19. A list of these with hyperlinks has been added to the document. The guidance has already been made available to LRFs and their constituent planners with instructions to share with those responsible locally for managing the deceased. The aim of issuing it now to you is to ensure members also have access to it.

Closure of Crematoria and Cemeteries

The Ministry of Justice has confirmed that Section 5 (8) of the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#) requires those responsible for crematoria to close them except for funerals. This requirement to close would also include a cemetery if the crematorium is situated in the cemetery, which could then only be open for burials. The regulation does not apply to other cemeteries, which can stay open.

In Wales, the Welsh Government has reversed an earlier decision that the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) applies to cemeteries and crematoria, and that now only crematoria should be closed, except for funerals. If the crematorium is in a cemetery that cemetery should also be closed, except for burials.

In Scotland, the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) requires crematoria to close (and the cemetery if the crematorium is situated in the cemetery), except for funerals where reasonable measures are taken to ensure that a distance of two metres is maintained between every person on the premises of the crematorium during the funeral or burial (other than between two members of the same household, or a carer of the person assisted by the carer).

In Northern Ireland, the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Northern Ireland\) Regulations 2020](#) requires that crematoria and burial grounds are closed except for funerals or burials.

In summary

	Crematoria must close, and a cemetery if the crematorium is in a cemetery, except for funerals & burials	Cemeteries must close, except for funerals and burials
England	Yes	No
Scotland	Yes	No
Wales	Yes	No
Northern Ireland	Yes	Yes

It is important to note that although cemeteries in England, Scotland and Wales are not required to be closed, they may be closed if they are being misused and health and safety are being put at risk.

The Journal

The Summer Journal is currently being produced and it would be really useful if members could share their experiences of planning for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (or any other stories they would like to share).

Please submit any copy, including photographs where relevant, to the ICCM Technical Services and Journal Officer, Sofia Allana, at sallana@institutecemandcrem.com. If you would like to discuss contributing an article, please call Sofia on 07502 627521.

Please continue to follow Government guidance and stay safe.