

FAQs for funeral directors - Alert Level 2

What are the rules for funerals and tangihanga under Level 2?

At Alert Level 2 gatherings, including funerals and tangihanga, are restricted to a maximum of 100 attendees.

Planning a funeral or tangihanga

Can family and /or whānau take a body home?

Yes. A deceased person may be transferred to a private address under Alert Level 2.

May we be able to hold services at a church or marae?

Yes. A funeral or tangihanga may be held in a church, marae, or community hall under Alert Level 2.

Can the family come to the funeral home to make funeral arrangements?

Yes, but it is recommended you continue to make arrangements via the phone or video conference where possible. Where arrangements need to take place face-to-face, this should be in the controlled environment of a funeral home. Again, personal hygiene and physical distancing measures must be followed.

Can a funeral director have two funeral or tangihanga at different times with 100 people at each event?

Yes, you can hold multiple events if physical distancing requirements for gatherings are followed.

Can the deceased be transported inter-regionally?

Yes, transporting the deceased can be done by a funeral director or privately.

Can family, whānau and friends travel for a funeral?

Yes. People can travel anywhere in New Zealand for a funeral.

What are the rules for viewings during Alert Level 2?

Viewings can occur, but all venues must provide for physical distancing. This requires people to keep at least one metre apart when indoors. Funeral homes must continue to keep a register for contact tracing under Alert Level 2. This register must include:

- exact day and time the event took place
- full names of each person attending the event
- the current address, email address and mobile phone number of each attendee.

Funeral directors must also display an [official NZ COVID Tracer QR code](#).

If funeral directors or venue owners keep contact tracing records, they should be kept secure for two months and once they are two months old, they should be destroyed. The information in the register must only be used for the purpose of contact tracing and only shared with the Ministry of Health or district health boards, should this be required. Attendees should not have access to anyone else's personal information.

May a person view their loved one more than once?

Yes, there is no restriction at Alert Level 2 on the number of times a person or group can view their loved one.

During the funeral/tangihanga

Can I have an open casket at funerals or tangihanga?

Although an open casket is allowable, it is preferable to have a closed casket. If an open casket is decided upon, then physical distancing will need to be ensured.

How long can the attendees be gathered at a funeral home for the service?

It is recommended the total duration of a service should not exceed two hours.

If my chapel is small, is it ok for attendees not to observe physical distancing?

Everyone in your funeral home must observe physical distancing. This includes staff, ministers and celebrants, as well as doctors or family/whānau visiting to view the deceased. You should only host as many people in your chapel (up to 100 people) that can observe physical distancing.

Can families sit together at a funeral or tangihanga?

Yes. A family who live together can sit together without physical distancing.

Why is there a seat number column on the contact tracing form?

The form is a standard one designed to cover a wide range of venues. For an entirely seated event, it's best practice to know who sits next to whom, rather like an aircraft, so contact tracers can target the closest people to a suspected case first. For events where people move around (of course remembering that they will maintain physical distancing if they do), the contact tracers will need to contact everyone but the more information you can provide about the movements of people, the faster and more accurate contact tracing will be.

Are funeral directors expected to enforce the rules?

A funeral director is required to keep a contact tracing form and display an official [NZ COVID Tracer QR code](#). You should contact the Police for assistance if you encounter high levels of anxiety, distress, disorder or confrontational behaviour. Dial 111 in an emergency.

Can a funeral home offer refreshments?

Yes. The serving of food and drink is permitted provided the venue can meet the physical distancing and hygiene requirements for food preparation and serving. This includes groupings of no more than 10 people eating together, food should be served as individual portions and not from a buffet, and no alcohol may be served or consumed on the premises.

Who can go to the cemetery or crematorium for the burial?

Subject to the local rules at the cemetery or crematorium, up to up to 100 family, friends and whānau may travel to the cemetery or crematorium. If those visiting the cemetery or crematorium are different from those in the funeral or tangihanga, this must be registered as a separate event and all people are recorded.

Other information

Do funeral staff need to sign in and out?

Each funeral business should be able to provide contact tracing information for everyone in their premises throughout the day. This includes your staff; signing in and out will help keep them safe.

What Health and Safety plans do funeral directors need?

Funeral directors must have a COVID-19 Health & Safety plan. It should be shared with family and whānau who engage the services of a funeral director so that they are aware of any restrictions and/or requirements in relation to the service. Your COVID-19 H&S plan should be displayed so it can be easily viewed by those entering your premises. FDANZ has developed a COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan that you can download at www.fdanz.org.nz