



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Kentucky State Veteran Cemetery Directors

**DATE:** May 14, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Resumption of Cemetery Operations and Memorial Services – Phase 1

As the Commonwealth of Kentucky transitions from 'Healthy at Home' to 'Healthy at Work', the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) will do the same beginning with all five State Veterans Cemeteries (SVCs), effective Monday, June 1, 2020. On this date, Kentucky's SVCs will implement a phased transition plan to return to providing full interments, including memorial services, and military funeral honors.

Working in coordination with funeral and memorial service providers, and Veteran Service Organizations all partners will be required to follow Kentucky's 'Healthy at Work Minimum Requirements for all Entities' guidelines (Attachment 1) and the industry specific guidance 'Healthy at Work Requirements for Funeral and Memorial Services' (Attachment 2). In addition, Cemetery Directors will comply with Personnel Memorandum 20-06, COVID-19 Mask Policy, Effective May 18, 2020 (Attachment 3), as well as the following guidance.

These policies will serve to protect employees and visitors from any individual who have been infected with coronavirus, but do not yet demonstrate symptoms of the illness.

- **Training:** Prior to reopening to the public, Cemetery Directors will conduct training with all staff using the guidance contained in the attachments specified above, as well as the Coronavirus Guidance Frequently Asked Questions (Attachment 4), 10 Steps to Fight COVID-19 (Attachment 5). For additional resources go to the Team Kentucky COVID-19 website [www.kycovid19.ky.gov](http://www.kycovid19.ky.gov).
- **Visitors:** Cemetery directors will reopen their administrative office to visitors and next of kin on a limited basis to the extent that facilities can accommodate visitors and can stay at least 6 feet from each other. Physical distancing guidelines must be followed. All other visitors will remain outside.



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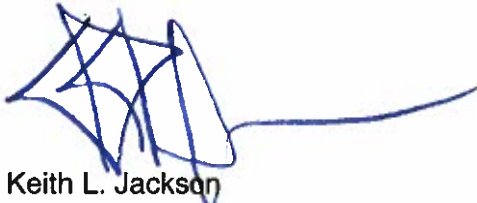
- Personal Hygiene: Hand sanitizer dispensers will be provided at the entrance of each administration building where visitors enter. All employees and visitors will sanitize their hands at the hand sanitizer station when entering.
- Masks: Cemetery directors are responsible for providing masks to cemetery staff and offering masks to visitors to the administration building. Funeral and memorial service providers are responsible for relaying mask requirements to their staff, clergy, and service attendees.
  - Visitors will be asked to wear a mask when entering the administrative office. Clean masks will be made available for visitors that do not have a mask upon arrival. They may keep the mask when they leave the office. If a visitor chooses not to wear a mask, they will still be permitted to enter the building/office and meet with staff.
  - Funeral and memorial service providers should ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that officiants, funeral directors, clergy, their staff-employees, and service attendees wear coverings (e.g., cloth mask or bandana) over their mouths and noses while attending services.
  - Exceptions are authorized for persons who are unable to wear a mask due to underlying medical conditions.
  - Gravesite visitors of the same family household are not required to wear a mask while visiting gravesites, but should refrain from engaging with cemetery staff unless masked.
- Memorial Services: Cemetery directors will coordinate with funeral directors to ensure memorial services are conducted in a manner consistent with industry-specific guidance and encourages funeral attendees to express their love and sympathy without physical touching.
  - Cemetery staff will sanitize the committal shelter chairs and podium prior to the start of each committal service.
  - Gatherings in committal shelters will be limited to officiants, funeral directors, clergy, pallbearers, staff-employees, flag and rifle shell presenters, and family members with seating and standing scattered throughout the shelter to ensure a minimum of 6 feet physical distance between household family units.
  - Other guests, mourners, and attendees should be encouraged by funeral and memorial service providers and cemetery staff to remain in their vehicles and not socialize through their vehicle windows, except at a distance of more than 6 feet. Attendees should turn off their vehicles to avoid idling and protect everyone's health.
  - Cemetery directors will ensure minimum staff at the committal shelter during memorial services.
- Military Honors: Cemetery directors will work with the military honors team to ensure they practice physical distancing to the greatest extent practicable.
  - Rifle teams will maintain social distancing from committal shelter services, keep their movements separated from other guests and mourners, and have minimal interactions with other attendees.
  - Cemetery director's will ensure that the persons from the Military Honors team that presents the flag and the rifle shells from the rifle salute are wearing a mask and gloves when presenting to the next of kin.

- Gravesites: Funeral directors are responsible for placing flower arrangements on the gravesites following interment.
- Cemetery Staff: Cemetery grounds crews will continue to practice social distancing from the public, while still providing guidance and help to families that are visiting the cemeteries.

Phase 2 guidance for scheduling and implementing military funeral honors for veterans interred during the direct interment period will be released at the end of June 2020.

It is the intent of the KDVA to move from 'Healthy at Home' to 'Healthy at Work' while keeping our employees, veterans and their families healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Veterans Cemeteries Branch will continue to provide interments and perpetual care for all qualified veterans and eligible family members in a dignified and compassionate manner worthy of respect and honor that they richly deserve.

Point of contact for this policy is Cemeteries Branch Manager Alvin Duncan, Office: 502-782-5731, Cell: 502-229-2718, or email: [Alvin.Duncan@ky.gov](mailto:Alvin.Duncan@ky.gov).



Keith L. Jackson  
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (Ret)  
Commissioner

**Attachments:**

1. Healthy at Work Minimum Requirements for all Entities
2. Healthy at Work Requirements for Funeral and Memorial Services
3. Personnel Memorandum 20-06, COVID-19 Mask Policy, Effective May 18, 2020
4. Coronavirus Guidance Frequently Asked Questions
5. 10 Steps to Fight COVID-19

