



The Association of Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Hartford of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford

Important Information Concerning the COVID-19 Pandemic Revised and effective April 14, 2020

The Association of Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Hartford (AJC) is committed to the health and safety of those individuals visiting our cemeteries, the families who are making funeral arrangements, our caretakers, gravediggers, funeral directors and the AJC professional team. In compliance with the CDC, the World Health Organization and protocol promulgated by federal, state and local governments, AJC is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation.

Effective immediately, and subject to change, AJC is operating according to the following protocol:

Our Cemeteries: As of now, AJC cemeteries will remain open to the public for visitation Sunday through Friday from sunrise to sunset except for religious holidays.

Burials: We will continue to allow all scheduled burials at AJC cemeteries, subject to specific protocol regarding social distancing, protective gear for our caretakers and gravediggers and limitations regarding attendance at graveside memorial services and burials with the following protocols:

- Graveside services should be conducted in a limited and private manner **for immediate family only** in accordance with the current social distancing protocols and the latest guidance from our local and federal officials and public health professionals.
- Everyone on the premises where the burial is taking place **must be wearing disposable gloves and a mask at all times.**
- In order to create a safe distance between the funeral director/clergy and the family, the funeral directors should place cones out.
- Anyone attending a graveside service **must be screened prior to arrival at the cemetery** by the officiating rabbi and/or the funeral director for the following questions:
 1. Has said person been ill, diagnosed with COVID-19 or experienced any of the COVID-19 related symptoms (including but not limited to cough, fever, muscle aches and alike)?
 2. Has said person been around anyone ill, diagnosed with COVID-19 or experienced any of the COVID-19 related symptoms (including but not limited to cough, fever, muscle aches and alike)?
 3. Has said person traveled outside the US or been on a cruise in the past 14 days?

Any person answering yes to any of these questions will be strictly prohibited from attending a burial or being physically present at any of these graveside services.

- In the event that anyone that is suspected of or has contracted or exposed to the COVID-19 virus, it is their responsibility and anyone that is aware of or knows about it, to share or notify the Funeral Directors and United States Cemetery Services and related parties. If this should occur, then all protocol

promulgated by the State, City, the CDC, the World Health Organization and any relevant government agency or official will be strictly adhered to.

- Until further notice, canopies and chairs are not permitted on AJC cemeteries. During inclement weather, umbrellas that have been sanitized may be provided by the funeral home.

Operationally, the graveside service should be conducted as follows:

- The casket will be carried and lowered into the grave by the funeral director/assistants or other cemetery staff or by the officiating rabbi if needed (no pallbearers allowed), after which cemetery staff will step back from the grave until the completion of the short graveside service.
- At this point, a brief service should commence -- including only the essential and necessary components (as per each denominational tradition). All other components should be reserved for a post-burial live-streamed funeral service which both the family, mourners and public can take part in - including eulogies and alike.
- The tradition of shoveling of dirt may continue (at the discretion of the officiant) **provided that gloves are handed out to a limited group of shovelers, all maintain proper distance, and the shovel is wiped down between services. Masks also need to be worn.** Alternate shoveling opportunities may also be provided including disposable paper cups for mourners to cast dirt onto the grave or spades.
- Funeral directors and assistants must direct families to create a social distance at graveside of **at least 6 feet** from one another and will use best efforts to remind families during the service.
- Family members must immediately return to their vehicles when the graveside service has concluded.

General Information:

Unveilings: Unveilings will not be allowed until further notice.

Grave Sales and Pre-Planning Meetings: AJC professional staff is currently only available for an in person grave selection meeting at the cemetery to assist families **where a death has occurred or is imminent**, although preference is to make arrangements over the phone. Only one family representative will be allowed to meet our staff at the cemetery and must keep a distance of 6 feet from one another. Additionally, in person pre-need sales appointments will not be scheduled until further notice. AJC professional staff is available to schedule telephone appointments in order to answer questions and handle pre-need purchases and payment.

AJC Business Office: The AJC Business Office personnel are working remotely and can be contacted by telephone at (860) 978-1435 as opposed to in-person visits. AJC will not be scheduling appointments or meetings at our offices until further notice. AJC reserves the right to modify this protocol at any time. We appreciate your cooperation as we do our best to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 while at the same time serve the community in these challenging times.

Thank you for your cooperation. This protocol is subject to change at any time. Please email Lisa Vaeth, AJC's Director, with any questions/concerns regarding this Cemetery Protocol document at lvaeth@jewishhartford.org. For questions/concerns with the Greater Hartford Rabbinical Association Funeral Protocol document, please email Rabbi Brander at rabbi@youngisraelwh.org.

Issued: April 14, 2020