



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

Michael H. Henshaw
Cemeteries Director

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November 18, 2020

To: Virginia Funeral Homes

Re: Pandemic Limitations

Dear Funeral Directors,

I hope this letter finds you safe and healthy. On November 13, 2020, Governor Northam amended Executive Order #67 to restrict the size of gatherings (both indoor and outdoor) to a maximum number of twenty-five persons. While this limitation does not strictly apply to memorial services and other religious gatherings, we desire to do all we can to provide a safe environment for funeral homes and families who attend services at our state veterans' cemeteries in Amelia, Suffolk and Dublin. As such, we request you make every effort to limit the size of memorial service gatherings. Additionally, because Executive Order #67 does mandate that all family groups must be at least 6 feet part from each other while attending religious services, we must limit the number of persons inside our chapel and committal shelters to approximately 20 persons. Additional persons may be allowed outside of the chapel and committal shelters provided they properly distance themselves from the group.

The twenty person limit includes family and friends, funeral home staff and clergy. It does not include military funeral honors personnel or cemetery staff, provided they maintain strict distancing from the other attendees. The order also requires the use of face coverings for all persons five years and older at all times. We are asking for your assistance to help us follow these guidelines to the maximum extent possible, while realizing the difficulty this may pose during such an emotional time in the family member's life.

I sincerely appreciate your cooperation, understanding and assistance throughout this pandemic. The Virginia Department of Veterans Services is committed to providing safe and solemn places for families to lay their loved-one to rest and will strive to continue to provide these services to the best of our ability as the situation allows.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding our committal service protocols. Thank you again for your assistance and understanding

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Henshaw".

Michael H. Henshaw
Director
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