

# COVID-19

## COVID-19 Alert Level 3: Information for families and whānau

3 September 2021

At Alert Level 3, you can hold a funeral, tangihanga or burial. These services are limited to 10 people, including kaikaranga, kaikōrero, members of the clergy or staff who are attending.

Formal tangihanga involving large gatherings cannot take place at Alert Level 3.

At Alert Level 3, funeral and tangihanga must take place at a funeral home. Churches and maraes are closed at Alert Level 3.

### What to do when someone dies

- Appoint a whānau member or person in your bubble to liaise with a registered funeral director, health providers and/or police.
- Contact the health provider or GP of the person who passed away.
- Get in touch with a registered funeral director who will help you organise next steps.

### Contacting the health provider or GP of the person who passed away

**If your loved one has died from a known health issue**, the health provider will liaise directly with a registered funeral director (once appointed) to pass on the necessary information.

**If your loved one has died from COVID-19**, the health provider or GP will provide you with information on what to do next – there are strict guidelines that must be followed.

**If your loved one has died from an unknown cause**, a post-mortem may need to be undertaken. The health provider or GP will assist you in the first instance and Police will facilitate this process. They will work directly with your appointed liaison.

### Getting in touch with a local funeral director

A registered funeral director must be engaged to carry out the functions of burial or cremation and transporting a deceased person in New Zealand. Whānau or communities must not carry out burials, cremations or transportation of deceased persons without engaging a registered funeral director.

Registered funeral directors will continue working during Alert Level 3. They will be able to guide you on the best options for your situation.

Asking family, whānau and friends who they have used in the past is a good way to find a funeral director. You can also look in the yellow pages or online on the **FDANZ** or **NZIFH** websites.

## Working with your funeral director – be prepared

Funeral directors may uplift your loved one while wearing personal protective equipment, for example masks, gloves, protective clothing. This may be daunting for whānau, especially young ones.

They will allow one appointed whānau member to facilitate arrangements including paperwork – this may need to be done remotely or at least using strict social distancing measures.

Whānau members (up to two) from the same bubble as the deceased are allowed to dress their loved one – however this must be carried out in the presence of an embalmer or funeral director.

Funeral directors may also allow religious rituals for the care of the body to occur. However, these must be carried out in the presence of an embalmer who will give direction to anyone present on the correct PPE requirements.

## Farewelling your loved one

Whānau members (up to 10) who were in the same isolation bubble as the deceased are allowed to view their loved one at a funeral home. Other groups can also view the deceased by appointment, but only in groups of up to 10, and they must live in the same bubble.

Talk with your funeral director about specific arrangements, including how to maintain physical distance. They can guide you on the best options for your situation, which may include livestreaming or video so others can take part in the service remotely.

If you are attending a funeral or tangihanga, we recommend you:

- keep 2 metres away from people you do not live with
- avoid physical contact, including harirū, hongī, kissing, and hugging
- wear a face covering.

## Burial at urupā

Whānau who live in the same region as their urupā may opt to have their loved one buried there.

The person you've selected to liaise with the funeral director will also need to make the urupā arrangements themselves. Marae can assist with making these arrangements.

## Travel for tangihanga

Whānau can travel **within** Alert Level 3 regions for a viewing, tangihanga, or burial. They do not need an exemption to do this.

If whānau would like to travel through an Alert Level 4 region, without stopping, to attend a funeral or tangihanga in an Alert Level 3 region, they will need to apply for an exemption.

Whānau can apply for an exemption **online**.

## Other important information

### If your loved one passes away in hospital

The hospital will transfer your loved one to its mortuary and then into your funeral director's care.