

**BY ORDER OF THE ST. CHARLES COUNTY
DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**2019 Novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”)
Loss of Life Order**

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, a state of emergency was declared in St. Charles County relating to the immediate and significant risk posed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of the people of St. Charles County that is presented by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the disease which causes Novel Coronavirus 2019 (“COVID-19”);

WHEREAS, several executive orders have been issued since authorizing the director of the St. Charles County Department of Public Health (“SCCDPH”) to issue orders, policies, and other rules to implement those executive orders; and

WHEREAS, the SCCDPH has been closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by COVID-19. Infections with COVID-19 have been reported around the world. The first confirmed instance of person-to-person spread of the virus in the United States was reported on January 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is considered an infectious, contagious, communicable, and dangerous disease for purposes of §§192.020, 192.139, & 192.300 RSMo.; 19 CSR 20-20.020; and other state and local laws. The SCCDPH's director is the "local health authority" pursuant to 19 CSR 20-20.010(26) and has been delegated the authority to act on St. Charles County's behalf for the public health purposes described in §192.300 RSMo.; and

WHEREAS, the intent of this order is to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in St. Charles County by establishing respectful and safe procedures for funeral directors, medical transport, and crematories for handling COVID-19 decedents; and

WHEREAS, to protect the public health and to recognize and treat with dignity those who die with COVID-19, SCCDPH must address the storage capacity of funeral homes, hospitals, and other businesses which could be strained during this emergency. In addition, SCCDPH needs to address the disposition of a decedent in the event that a decedent is unclaimed. §194.119 RSMo sets forth the “right of sepulcher” defined as the right to choose and control final disposition of a dead human body. This Order does not change those rights set forth in §194.119 RSMo. However, for purposes of public health, this Order does authorize the Medical Examiner of the St. Charles County the right to choose and control the burial, cremation, or other final disposition of the remains of decedents who remain unclaimed after 14 days without known family or responsible parties; and

WHEREAS, this Order is authorized pursuant to §§192.006, 192.200, and 192.300 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri; 19 CSR 20-20.040 and 19 CSR 20-20.050 of the Rules of the Department of Health and Senior Services and by certain Executive Orders, as may be further amended.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DEMETRIUS CIANCI-CHAPMAN, DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MISSOURI, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of Missouri, and the Charter and Ordinances of the County of St. Charles, do hereby issue the following Public Health Emergency Order:

1. Burial, Cremation or Direct Internment of decedents with known or suspected cases of COVID-19 or decedents who have died for unknown reasons shall be handled as follows:
 - a. The remains of decedent shall be buried, cremated, or otherwise finally disposed of within 10 days of the date of death unless the Director of Public Health of the jurisdiction in which the decedent died or in which the remains repose provides an exception for a defined number of days, which exception shall only be granted for good cause shown.
 - b. The remains of decedents who remain unclaimed for more than 14 days by known

family or responsible party (such as the Public Administrator or court appointed guardian or administrator) under §194.119 RSMo shall come within the custody and control of the St. Charles County Medical Examiner if the person resided in St. Charles County prior to death, or the person resided in St. Charles County prior to hospitalization and death, for purposes of choosing the control of the burial, cremation or other final disposition of the remains. Any decedent referred for such action shall be photographed, fingerprinted, and have a DNA sample taken.

- c. Decedents who are unable to be transported directly to a funeral home or crematorium shall be transferred to a defined Interjurisdictional Location to allow the family or responsible party time to make decisions regarding final disposition and funeral arrangements.

2. Infection Control in Funeral Homes: Funeral Homes shall utilize standard infection control procedures for anyone who has died with COVID-19. Per the Centers of Disease Control (“CDC”), funeral directors in the United States must have appropriate training, credentials and experience to safely embalm decedents with viral pathogens, such as COVID-19, by using currently accepted standards of care and standard operating procedures consistent with OSHA regulations. In affirming the safety of embalming victims who have died with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, funeral homes shall:

- a. Assure proper PPE is used and that all staff are trained on the proper donning and doffing of PPE. If aerosols are likely to be generated, respiratory protection (e.g., NIOSH-approved N-95 respirator or higher level of protection) shall be worn; and
- b. Consider embalming without aspiration to minimize the production of aerosols; and
- c. Use negative-pressure isolation rooms when available. When such rooms are not available, follow CDC recommendations when aerosols may be generated, such as keeping the door to the prep room closed; and
- d. Sanitize rooms used to prepare bodies with EPA approved disinfectant products that have been qualified to be effective against COVID-19; and

- e. Promote hand hygiene to prevent cross contamination to other areas of the funeral home; and
- f. Maintain other environmental controls as outlined by the CDC; and
- g. Follow OSHA requirements to conduct hazard assessments/risk determinations to prevent workers' exposure to health and safety risks. If risks cannot be controlled using the hierarchy of controls approach, then the procedure(s) should not be conducted; and
- h. Consider the risks and benefits of staff members with risk factors for increased morbidity and mortality related to COVID-19 infection and whether those staff members should embalm confirmed or suspected COVID-19 decedents; and
- i. If washing the body or shrouding are important religious or cultural practices, families are encouraged to work with their community's cultural and religious leaders and funeral home staff on how to reduce their exposures associated with these activities. At a minimum, people conducting these activities should wear disposable gloves, gown, and face shield or goggles and facemask; and
- j. Clean and disinfect the mortuary work area after use using an EPA register hospital grade disinfectant.


3. Funeral Directives:

- a. Decedents shall be buried or cremated in accordance with current Missouri statutory and regulatory requirements.
- b. Funerals shall be limited to gatherings of no more than 10 people, with social distancing as per Executive Order 20-04.
- c. Funeral homes shall, at a minimum, inform all participants and families to practice social distancing (separation of at least 6 feet) at the service.
- d. Funeral homes shall supply tissues and alcohol-based hand rubs and have an adequate supply of soap and paper towels in the rest rooms.
- e. People who feel sick or are part of an at-risk population (elderly, immune-compromised, other underlying health conditions) shall be instructed to stay home.
- f. Attendees shall not touch or kiss the body of someone who has died of COVID-19.

g. Each funeral home shall develop a plan to comply with these guidelines and remain informed regarding current CDC guidelines to protect their staff and the families of the deceased.

4. Definitions: For purposes of this order, these terms, regardless of whether capitalized, are defined as follows:
- a. "CDC" means Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States Department of Health and Human Services;
 - b. "Interjurisdictional Location" means the temporary facility designed to temporarily provide storage capacity for those who die with known COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 to allow the family or responsible party time to make decisions regarding cremation or burial and funeral arrangements. This facility will be used as a regional facility for temporary storage;
 - c. "PPE" means personal protection equipment, including protective clothing, gloves, face shield, goggles, facemasks, and any other equipment used to protect the wearer from the spread of infection or illness; and
 - d. "Social Distancing" means maintaining at least six-foot social distancing from other individuals; and
 - e. "Hand Hygiene" means washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer with more than sixty percent alcohol, covering coughs or sneezes with something other than hands, regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands, or as otherwise defined by order.
5. This order shall become effective at 12:01 a.m. on April 17, 2020. This order shall expire only upon further order.

Signed this 16th day of April, 2020.


Demetrius Cianci-Chapman, Director

Department of Public Health
St. Charles County, Missouri

ATTEST:



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brenda Hinton", is written over a horizontal line.

Brenda Hinton, County Registrar