



# THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA DIE APOSTOLIESE GELOOFSENDING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

(PBO no/WO nr: 930004069)

## NATIONAL OFFICE – NASIONALE KANTOOR

Building no. 14, Central Office Park, 257 Jean Avenue, Centurion, Gauteng, South Africa.  
Gebou nr. 14, Central Office Park, Jeanlaan 257, Centurion, Gauteng, Suid-Afrika.

P.O. Box /Posbus 9450, Centurion 0046  
Tel: 27 12 644-0490 (8 lines/lyne) Fax/Faks: 27 12 644-0732/4

Website/Webwerf: [www.afm-ags.org](http://www.afm-ags.org) e-mail/e-pos: [mmahlobo@afm-ags.org](mailto:mmahlobo@afm-ags.org) (President);  
[ilapoorta@afm-ags.org](mailto:ilapoorta@afm-ags.org) (Deputy/Vise President); [henri@afm-ags.org](mailto:henri@afm-ags.org) (General  
Secretary/Hoofsekretaris); [barend@afm-ags.org](mailto:barend@afm-ags.org) (General Treasurer / Hooftesourier)

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### FUNERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALERT LEVEL 1 Issued on 23 September 2020

The current Covid-19 has affected the way we grieve and honour the memories of our members who have passed on. It has also affected the way we conduct funerals, especially when it comes to those who have succumbed due to the pandemic.

While we find new ways of dealing with bereavement, we need to bear in mind the highly infectious nature of the coronavirus. It is for these reasons that special measures and guidelines need to be adhered to when it comes to meeting bereaved families and funerals.

We ask you to keep within the following guidelines when it comes to what need to happen prior, during and post funerals.

NB. These guidelines exclude Covid-19 related deaths when it comes to death at home and preparation (washing of the body). In the case of a Covid-19 related death at home or in hospital, the undertaker will have (or must get hold of) the rules and regulations that must be followed, and act accordingly. In this case the body of the deceased remains in the undertakers' car from the mortuary until arrival at the cemetery. A copy of the presentation of National Department of Health on regulations regarding handling of Covid-19 infected human remains is included herein for reference purposes.

#### 1. DEATH AT HOME

The death must be reported to the Police and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) before the body is removed by the undertaker.

#### 2. PREPARATION OR WASHING OF THE BODY

- 2.1 The body may be washed, but only at the mortuary or undertaker's premises.
- 2.2 The body may be dressed at the mortuary or undertakers' premises.

### **3. NIGHT VIGILS**

Night vigils are not allowed. This is because the virus spreads very easily when people are in close contact with one another.

### **4. VALEDICTORY**

If the family wishes to have a short valedictory ceremony, it must be done in an area that allows adherence to safety measures outlined in 6.4 herein below.

### **5. VIEWING OF THE BODY**

5.1 It is recommended that the viewing of the body should be restricted to family members only.

5.2 It should be done in a ventilated and decongested place which allows safety measures as stated in 6.4, herein below.

5.3 Family members should be arranged to assist those who become overwhelmed by emotions (if possible, they should be discouraged from viewing the body).

### **6. FUNERAL SERVICE**

#### **6.1 Pastoral Responsibility**

- The Pastor requested by the family to lead the funeral service must take responsibility of ensuring that regulations, in respect of funerals, are complied with.
- Should there be a breach, he/she will be answerable to the authorities and might face penalty or even arrest.

#### **6.2 Venue**

The funeral service should be held at a venue that has been decontaminated prior to the service.

#### **6.3 Funeral Service attendance**

- Close relatives should be prioritized when it comes to attendance.
- Attendance is restricted to only 100 people. This includes the pastor/s who conducts or attends the funeral, but not the undertaker.

#### **6.4 Safety Measures**

The following, Covid-19 safety measures should strictly be adhered to:

- Attendance at home, church and cemetery should not exceed 100 people.
- According to the size of the house, and to always keep a distance of 1.5 metres, only a small number of people might be allowed inside the house at a time.
- Attendees must go through a screening process inclusive of a temperature check.

- All entrances must have sanitizers and hands must be sanitized or washed with soap and water often.
- Masks covering mouths and noses must be worn.
- Social distancing rules of 1.5m should always be followed.
- No handshaking, hugging, or kissing is allowed before, during or after the service. If any of the family members or mourners have a sore throat, dry cough or fever, it might be symptoms of Covid-19 and in order not to possibly infect others they must not attend the funeral but stay at home.

#### **6.5 Singing during the service:**

- The number of worship leaders, singers and musicians/band members should be limited, and social distancing and strict hygiene should always be observed.
- Instrumental music or solo singing can fill the slots where hymns or choruses would usually be sung.
- Where projection of songs or Scripture on overhead screens is possible, this should be used.
- Where the same microphone must be used by more than one person. The microphone as well as the hands of the people involved must be sanitized regularly.
- If/when the audience do sing, the following is important: Masks must be in place covering both the mouth and nose, social distancing must be strictly observed, members must intentionally lower the volume of their voice.
- Members should remain in their places and sing and dance there.

#### **6.6 Duration of the service**

The funeral services must be kept short - no longer than 3 hours (and 2 hours for Covid-19 related death).

### **7. BURIAL**

- 7.1 The Pastor appointed by the family will be responsible for the service at the grave site. This service should not be longer than 30 minutes.
- 7.2 Funeral undertakers are responsible for the lowering of the body into the grave.
- 7.3 In areas, where the filling up of the grave, is done by attendees, volunteers should be on standby, to sanitize the spades, shovels and any other tools used before it exchanges hands.



**MG MAHLOBO**  
**PRESIDENT**