

Registrar's Directive: COVID colour chart returns; adjustments to MEDR

Effective Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021

Changing provincial rules to address COVID-19 mean a return to the BAO's colour code chart of restrictions and adjustments to the Modified Expedited Death Response in hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Monday's government announcement reintroduces the colour framework of restrictions based on local numbers of COVID-19 cases in public health unit jurisdictions.

For most of the province, at this time, all funeral services will continue to be restricted to 10 attendees in total indoors or outdoors, with two metres of distance between people.

But this will change when public health unit jurisdictions enter different colour zones, as determined by the Government of Ontario.

As of this writing, there were only three public health unit jurisdictions that will be changing on Wednesday from the Grey-Lockdown zone. (See the *Exceptions* section at the bottom of this directive message.)

Everyone must continue wearing a mask.

BAO colour chart

Here is the [BAO's corresponding colour chart](#), introduced in November, that is going into effect again starting tomorrow, Wednesday, Feb. 10. Please refer to it as further adjustments occur provincially in the changing pandemic.

Modified Expedited Death Response (MEDR)

The MEDR introduced on Jan. 12 with the province's emergency declaration **will remain in effect, but with a new list of public health unit jurisdictions exempted in alignment with the provincial government.**

Here's how the MEDR applies to BAO licensees in different service categories of the bereavement sector.

Funeral establishments and transfer service operators

1. Funeral/transfer staff must attend at hospitals and long-term care (LTC) facilities within six (6) hours of being advised that the decedent is ready for release.
2. Funeral/transfer staff will go inside the hospital/LTC if required and remove the decedent. (This is a change from the former EDR protocols in the first wave.)
3. Funeral/transfer staff are responsible for obtaining the Form 16 – Medical Certificate of Death (MCOB), completing a Form 15 (Statement of Death) and obtaining a Burial Permit. (There is no longer an electronic MCOB nor Coroners' call centre staff. We are working on a substitute.)
4. Funeral/transfer staff must make arrangements with the family within 24 hours of taking a body into care. Disposition must occur as soon as possible. There is to be no storing or "stockpiling" of decedents.

Keeping yourself and your staff healthy

1. Remember to clean and disinfect all equipment and surfaces rigorously.
If something can't be cleaned or disposed of, don't use it, i.e. – a stretcher or body pouch cover.
2. Use personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times.
3. Screen your staff.
Remember, people age 20-29 represent the largest number of infections by age group. Forty-two percent of COVID-19 positive people show no symptoms.
4. The restrictions for visitations and services remain in effect: Max 10, scheduled visitations with no cycling of guests; 15-minute cleaning break between periods; guest logging for contact tracing and physical distancing must be enforced; and, everyone must wear a mask or face covering.

Crematoriums and hydrolysis facilities

Crematoriums and hydrolysis facilities must operate at full capacity to accommodate demand in their area. This means they must operate for sufficient hours to prevent delays or backlogs.

Scheduled holds on cremations are prohibited.

Cemeteries

All cemeteries have been directed to continue burials as long as cemetery managers determine that ground conditions remain safe to do so. Interments are to proceed without delay to prevent storage and identification problems, and stockpiling.

Exceptions to the MEDR

The MEDR measures apply to all areas of the province, except those in the government's Green-Prevent and Yellow-Protect zones. Starting Wednesday, there are only three public health unit areas exempted from the MEDR: (at the time of this writing)

- Hastings Prince Edward
- Kingston, Frontenac, and Lennox & Addington, and
- Renfrew County and District

Application of the MEDR will change as the government moves public health unit jurisdictions to different restriction levels in its colour framework.

Only those jurisdictions in the Green-Prevent and Yellow-Protect zones will be exempt from the MEDR.

Refer to the [BAO's colour chart](#) to know which restrictions apply in your community.

Thank you all for your continued professional approach to this evolving pandemic environment.

--Carey Smith, CEO/Registrar