



April 21, 2020

Funerals, viewings and wakes prohibited

The Nunatsiavut Government wishes to remind Beneficiaries of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement that under the Provincial Public Health (COVID-19) Protection Order issued March 31, public funerals, visitations and wakes are prohibited, and burials are restricted to no more than five people (including the officiant).

The Nunatsiavut Government understands and appreciates the need for families to gather, grieve and support each other following the loss of a loved one, and realizes that not being able to have a funeral, memorial or other traditional/cultural ceremony can be heartbreaking. Funerals, however, like all other public gatherings, are very risky at this time. Even small gatherings can increase the possibility of spreading the COVID-19 virus. It can be particularly dangerous for Elders and people with pre-existing medical conditions to attend events such. It is essential that public health directives regarding public gatherings and physical distancing continue to be followed under ALL circumstances.

All those attending burials must remain at least two metres (six feet) apart at all times. No more than five people are allowed to dig the grave, and social distancing protocols must be followed. Pallbearers (up to four) are required to place the deceased at gravesites and vacate the area prior to burial. Following graveside services, the five participants (which includes the officiant) must vacate the area so that the body can be buried.

Where possible, people are encouraged to meet virtually, using electronic devices, to support family wishes during difficult times such as the loss of a loved one.

The Nunatsiavut Department of Health and Social Development is offering distance Mental Wellness Support Services, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday. Those requiring supports can call 1-833-896-5977. For additional supports, please visit: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/mental-health-and-wellness/>