

Guidance to Gurdwaras: Managing Covid -19 related deaths.

Dear All

The government has today issued guidance on care of the deceased and funeral procedures. Full details can be obtained from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased>.

The key points to note for Gurdwaras and the Sikh Community are:

1. Restrictions on number of people who attend funerals: Close family members and members of the household only. They need to be able to maintain the safe 2m social distance at all times.
2. There is a risk of infections so only people competent in the use of Personal Protective Equipment should have direct contact with the deceased. These will be the trained funeral directors in this instance and as many are now days well versed in Sikh traditions, the deceased will be prepared with sensitivity and dignity.
3. The mourners should also follow social distancing rules when traveling to and from the funeral.
4. In some situations, due to pressures on the system caused by high number of deaths or for infection risk minimisation reasons there may not be an option to bring the deceased home. The Funeral Director will be best placed to advice.
5. Please be guided by the funeral directors about viewing while also observing the social distance
6. Mourners should minimise any direct face-to-face or physical contact, for example, hugging each other unless they are part of the same household, that is, they have already been living in the same house as each other.
7. Mourners who attend should be signposted to the [advice on social distancing](#) and given information about what to do [should they become unwell](#)
8. Mourners who are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), or are part of a household with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, should not attend any gatherings
9. In many situations the household members of the deceased person will be the next of kin; they may be having to self-isolate in line with [household guidance](#). Where the funeral is scheduled to take place before the period of household isolation has been completed (14 days from the first case in that household), there should be no mixing between mourners who are self-isolating and those who are not

10. To minimise risk of infections individuals/families paying respects should be encouraged to do so over the phone.

11. Plans should be put in place to allow mourners to participate in the funeral service remotely through streaming.

Considerations for Gurdwara Sahibs:

In the interest of the well-being of the Granthis and the family of the deceased below are some key considerations.

12. It is advisable that the Granthi of the Gurdwara Sahib makes arrangements to travel straight to the cremation site to perform the Antem Ardaas. All briefings and attention to detail can take place in advance over the telephone.

13. The Sehaj Paath should take place at the Gurdwara Sahib only with minimum number of family members in attendance again observing the hygiene /social distancing requirements at all times.

14. Due to the short timescales within which many funerals are currently having to take place it may not be practical to have a Sehaj Paath. Under these exceptional circumstances and in the current climate, it would be advisable to consider the following option

- 1) Alaahnhia (ਅਲਾਹਣੀਆਂ, ਅੰਗ 578)
- 2) Ramkali Sath (ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਸਦ, ਅੰਗ 923)
- 3) Anand Sahib (ਅਨੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ 6 ਪੌੜੀਆਂ, ਅੰਗ 917)
- 4) Ardaas

Deg should also to be prepared. To minimise risks, it would be advisable not to serve langar under these circumstances.

A Sehaj Paath should then be conducted separately at a later date or once matters have settled relating to the infection risks of the virus.

The Sikh Helpline

The helpline is available 24/7 for support at this difficult time> Tel 07999 004363/0845 6440704 or info@sikhhelpline.com

Collated following consultation with several Gurdwaras and individuals working in the front line.

Satkar Committee UK;
Council of Gurdwaras South East London;
Sikh Study Forum London;
Consulted individuals
