



MESSAGE

18th March 2020

Coronavirus control measures in our crematoria

Dear funeral director

In line with the decrees issued by the national, regional and local authorities to combat the spread of the coronavirus, we would like to inform you concretely with this message about the new measures that will be applicable in our crematoria.

Both funeral homes and crematoria are regarded as essential services for which exceptions to the general lockdown apply. These exceptions are confirmed by the Flemish Government and the Provincial Governor.

A crematorium is pre-eminently a place where many people come together. Of course, we want to do everything we can to prevent the further spread of the virus, which forces us to implement a number of additional measures. Depending on the further evolution of the corona crisis, we may have to take additional or new measures, but we will inform you as soon as possible.

Below you will find the measures that are applicable in all PONTES crematoria until at least 5th April 2020.

1. Cremations

The execution of the cremations remains insured without restrictive measures, i.e. you can contact us at the usual times for cremation, delivery of coffins and collection of asurns.

If you are confronted with a deceased corona patient or if there is a suspicion of contamination and the family opts for a cremation, then the regulations of the Flemish Crisis Centre apply to the funeral directors.

The following regulations apply specifically to the crematorium:

- a) the reservation for such a cremation must explicitly state that it concerns a (suspected) corona patient;
- b) the supply of coffins with (suspected) corona patients is only possible if the permission for cremation is also included or available;
- c) the deceased must be placed in a coffin bag;
- d) the deceased coronary patients shall be cremated as a priority and as quickly as possible.

2. Farewell ceremonies

The reservation of the auditoriums for the organisation of a farewell ceremony remains possible - despite the overall ban on gathering - but restrictive measures apply here:

- a farewell ceremony can only take place in a limited circle, i.e. only the closest relatives (first and second rank) can attend the farewell ceremony; we urge that this number be kept as low as possible; in any case, there is an absolute maximum number of 30 participants;
- all auditoriums will remain available;
- we will try to avoid the use of waiting rooms as much as possible and refer everyone to the auditorium as soon as it is available;
- the rules of social distance are crucial for you, the visitors as well as for our staff and must be strictly respected; we ask for your active cooperation to place people at a sufficient distance from each other; only people of the same household can sit closer together, but otherwise distance must be kept; we reserve the right not to start or even cancel the farewell ceremony if these rules are not respected;
- for the record, we repeat here the rules of social distancing:
 - no hands, kisses or cuddles may be given;
 - be attentive to people belonging to at-risk groups (the elderly, heart, lung and kidney patients, diabetics, people with a weakened immune system);
 - avoid contact between the elderly and children;
 - keep sufficient distance;
 - avoid contact with people with symptoms of illness;
- no condolences can be given to avoid personal contact;
- the mourning cards are not handed out but laid out ready so that those present can take their own copy;
- everyone must observe the necessary hygiene measures;
- we urge you to make these measures known to the families for whom you are organising a funeral so that any disputes about them before the farewell ceremony can be avoided;
- we expect the funeral director to repeat these rules before the start of the farewell ceremony or you can ask our reception staff to do so.

3. Funeral meals

As all catering activities will be banned, all coffee tables and funeral meals will be cancelled. In other words, coffee tables can no longer be organised in our crematoria.

4. Finally

It goes without saying that we understand that, because of the measures taken, families are considering postponing a funeral until the threat of the coronavirus has disappeared and the measures are lifted.

Activities already booked can therefore be cancelled and/or postponed at no cost. After the crisis period, we will offer more opportunities for farewell ceremonies and coffee tables so that there will be more opportunities to organise postponed farewell moments.

For further questions and information, please contact the crematorium's services on telephone number 03 828 95 60 or by e-mail (info@pontes.be).

Antwerp, 18th March 2020

Tom Wustenberghs
general manager