



LAKE BABINE NATION EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC) – FUNERAL PROTOCOL FOR COVID-19 – ADDENDUM TO PANDEMIC PLAN

PURPOSE:

To enact a Lake Babine Nation Funeral Protocol under the management of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to take effect during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Crisis. This protocol will help to ensure the safety of our Nation's members dealing with funerals during COVID-19. The Funeral Protocol may be modified depending on how the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial and federal laws and policies to the pandemic evolve. The Funeral Protocol will be lifted when the Provincial Health Officer lifts the restrictions on mass and/or group gatherings.

CURRENT SITUATION:

On March 19, 2020 Lake Babine Nation Chief and Council has approved the closing of Lake Babine Nation Administration offices in Fort Babine, Tachet, and Woyenne due to COVID-19. Following that Lake Babine Nation Emergency Operations Center agreed that a Lake Babine Nation Funeral Protocol is a high priority. As such the following outlines the Lake Babine Nation approach to a funeral during COVID-19.

Traditional Funeral Practices

The Management of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) acknowledge that each community has their own Traditional funeral practices that they abide by in normal circumstances. During COVID-19 we may not implement these Traditional funeral practices but find unique and innovative ways to adapt our traditional protocols.

Mass Gatherings Cancellation and Physical Distancing

The Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry by order cancelled mass gatherings of more than 50 people until May 30, 2020, when it will be re-assessed. This cancellation of mass gathering is to reduce the number of people being infected by COVID-19. Interaction with people contributes to the transmission of respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 with elders and/or individual with pre-existing conditions being most at risk.

The Provincial Health Officer is also calling for physical distancing between people who don't live together. People who do not live together should keep 2 metres (or 6 feet) apart whenever possible, indoors and outdoors, including at any events and ceremonies.

Funeral Practices

The Management of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) acknowledge this is a difficult time to have a funeral during this pandemic. As such, these guidelines need to be recommended to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among our community and nation members. We need to keep our people safe.

Plan to proceed with funeral during COVID-19

1. In the event of a death the family of the deceased is to contact the Director (Incident Commander) of EOC immediately.

2. It is advised to apply best practice limiting funerals to immediate family of 5-10 people in attendance with physical distancing measures in place. (Note: people living in same household are exempt from this 2-meter physical distancing guideline.)
3. The following people should not attend a funeral:
 - a. Anyone having signs or symptoms of the virus
 - b. Anyone recently in contact with someone who has signs or symptoms of the virus;
 - c. Anyone who is required to be self-isolating for 14 days after travel outside of Canada in the past 14 days;
 - d. Anyone residing with an elder or somebody with significant chronic disease
4. To limit transmission of the virus (which potentially people showing no symptoms might be carrying) do not hug, shake hands or touch your face. Cough or sneeze into tissue or the bend of your arm and dispose of tissue in lined waste baskets followed by proper hand washing. If handwashing is not available, use hand sanitizer.
5. When the body is released from the funeral home resume funeral to the gravesite for immediate family only.
6. Viewing will be at the discretion of the funeral home.
7. Funeral Options:
 - a. *Cremation:* The practice of cremation is encouraged but no required until the COVID-19 Crisis is over.
 - b. *Future Ceremony:* it is recommended that when the Provincial Health Officer cease bans on mass gatherings and it is safe for communities and nation members to gather, that immediate family should post-pone celebration of life and potlatch feast until the Provincial Health Officer announces that the restrictions have been lifted.

Any concerns or questions about your health call *811 or go to www.fnha.ca/coronavirus or contact Murphy Patrick, EOC Planning at (250) 692-6742 or email eoc.planning@lakebabine.com or Bernard Patrick, EOC Director (Incident Command) at (250) 692-9587 or eoc.director@lakebabine.com

APPENDIX A:

Safe Handling of Bodies of Deceased Persons with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19: Interim Guidance. (BC Centre for Disease Control/BC Ministry of Health. April 2, 2020. Page 1-8)

APPROVED BY

DATE

Bernard Patrick
EOC Director

May 4 2020