

Ohkay Owingeh
Protocol/Procedure for Funeral
COVID-19 Pandemic
April 21, 2020

The primary objective of the following protocols & procedures is to safeguard the people of Ohkay Owingeh, while still being considerate to the immediate family of the deceased. The following has been established with the consultation and approval from the spiritual and religious leaders of Ohkay Owingeh, including the Catholic Church. This document is intended to provide guidance to families in this most difficult time. It is not intended to be inclusive of every possible situation, if unclear on a specific matter the family should consult with the Tribal Officials. This protocol & procedure document does not apply to clan members. It intended that this Protocol & Procedure Document be in effect on a temporary basis.

a. Upon Death In Community

- a. Ohkay contractor, Rivera Funeral Home will take possession of body. The tribal officials will be responsible for coordinating and keeping family informed.
- b. If there is any reason whatsoever to believe that the deceased could be positive for COVID-19 then neither Ohkay Owingeh nor the family will have access to the body, and the funeral home will follow all established practices to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- c. If there is no reason to believe that the deceased is positive for COVID-19, then the family will be allowed to view the body, dress body, have rosary and or sit with body provided that all activity takes place at Rivera Funeral Home and no more than 10 people may be at room at any time. In the case of large families the family should be in room in shifts so that there is never more than 10 people in room.
- d. The Tribal officials or family will still notify the Medicine Clan. All will put forth efforts to notify the head of all Clan/Spiritual leaders.

b. Modified Practices

- a. Dressing of Body – In the case of no positive the family members or designee may dress the body. All dressing activity will take place at funeral home following their protocol.
- b. Rosary/Bulerio – Mass gathering are prohibited at any location, home, funeral home, burial site and blessing by Church. Mass gathering indoors are defined as more than 10 people in room at any one time, mass gathering outdoors is defined as up to 30 people at least 6' apart from each other.
- c. Feeding/Taking of Food to Family – No outside food to be brought in and no feeding of visitors and other family should take place. It is advised that the immediate family prepare food and feed themselves/spirits, but no one else.
- d. Funeral Mass – The church is only doing a blessing of the body outside of the church, only immediate family practicing 6 ft. distance may attend.
- e. Procession to grave site – This is still encouraged to pass the Kiva and stomp. We ask only that all people try and stay at least 6' apart.

- f. Burial – No suspicion of COVID-19 - Prior to transporting body to Cemetery the body will be placed in body bag and burial box. All deceased will be laid to rest in burial boxes. The Tribal Fiscales will coordinate, identify and dig burial site. The Fiscales will be provided PPE equipment.
- g. Burial – Suspicion for COVID-19 - The Fiscales will not be placing deceased in the ground. The Pueblo contractor Rivera will do this with the assistance of the Fiscales. The Tribal Fiscales will still coordinate, identify and dig the burial site.
- h. Burial (Spiritual Leaders) – Only 1 spiritual leader will be present. Family will be asked to offer mother earth from their location at fence or where they stand 6' apart. Feeding mother earth at grave will be done few persons at a time.
- i. Attendees at Burial – Only the immediate family, Tribal Spiritual leader, and Priest will be allowed at burial site. All attendees will practice 6 ft. social distancing at the site.
- j. Post Burial – No talking to family by spiritual leaders. The 4 day ceremony will be practiced by individual families at their own homes only. No Mass gatherings.