NATIONAL EMERGENCY ALERT LEVEL 4 – KUA RĀHUI TE MOTU

It is not normal for our people to be isolated from one another, or to be prevented from hongi, awhiawhi or any physical support during tangihanga.

But this is not a normal situation and our nationwide efforts to reduce the impact of COVID-19 will take a huge effort from us all.

The Ministry of Health has provided official guidelines (amended on 30 March) for tangihanga during the Alert Level 4 period. Please read these carefully and share them with your whānau.

- **Immediately contact your local Police to inform them of the death.** You might want to talk to the Police Iwi Liaison Officer, which your local Police can help with.

- **Appoint a whānau member to liaise with Police and Health Providers.** This could be the person who first contacted your local Police.
  - If your hapu has a local kaiwhakarite to assist whānau during this time, you may want to contact them for advice.
  - Get in touch with your hapu and/or your marae to see if a kaiwhakarite has been established.

- **Contact their Health Provider (GP, Hauora, PHO).**
  - If your loved one has died from a known health issue, this will be critical information for the Police – your loved one’s health provider must deal directly with the Police and let them know.
  - If your loved one has died from COVID-19, then Police and/or the health provider need to know and they will support you with information about what to do next.
  - If your loved one has died from an unknown cause, there will need to be a post-mortem. The Police will look after this process and will talk directly with your appointed whānau member.

- **Get in touch with a local funeral director** to organise arrangements for burial or cremation.
  - If you are unsure about funeral directors, you could talk your local Police Iwi Liaison Officer, kaiwhakarite, Tribal Authority, health provider and/or local Civil Defence Emergency Management Centre.
  - Funeral directors have agreed to follow strict guidelines and may have other restrictions in place depending on their own health and safety protocols.
  - A list of Rotorua funeral homes can be found [here](#).

- Once you have got in touch with a funeral director, please be prepared – things will be different to what we are used to:
- They will collect your loved one wearing full protective clothing including masks and gloves – this might be upsetting for whānau, especially young ones.

- Only one appointed whānau member will be able to facilitate arrangements including paperwork – you can do this remotely or using social distancing measures.

- Only whānau who have been in the same isolation bubble as the tūpāpake (ie whānau pani/kirimate) will be able to go to the funeral home for viewing, karaia, poroporoakī or mihi.

- Other whānau and friends who are in separate isolation bubbles will unfortunately not be allowed to go to the funeral home either with the whānau-pani/kirimate or separately for viewing karakia, poroporoakī or mihi.

- All funeral directors are being encouraged to carry out burials and cremations as quickly as possible and at their nearest cemetery or burial ground.

- Depending on where you are, you might be able to have the deceased interred at an urupā or private cemetery if your funeral director agrees.

- Only whānau who have been in the same isolation bubble as the deceased will be allowed to go to the cemetery for the burial.

- If it is available where you are, whānau might be able to have their loved one placed in storage (refrigerated) until we are past the current Level 4 Alert – National Emergency. You can discuss this with your funeral director.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

**Tūpāpaku are potentially contagious**

- Where possible, PLEASE try to minimise contact with the deceased loved one.

- It will be very hard, but we cannot allow other people to come into contact with the deceased or with the people who have been in isolation with them.

- This means that whānau and friends will not be able to visit your whare or the funeral home to pay their respects.

- It also means that the amount of time you have with your deceased loved one will be short.

- Marae are closed during Alert Level 4 but marae can assist whānau via email, text and phone to ensure they have access to cultural and technology support if needed.

**If your loved one passes away in hospital**

- You may be able to view them at a safe distance before and after their passing, but only if the hospital is still allowing access to their buildings. Remote viewing may be available via technology.

- You will not be permitted to touch, wash and/or dress your loved one's body.

- The hospital will transfer your loved one to the funeral director's care.

**If your loved one passes away at home**

- Whānau touching, washing and/or dressing of your loved one’s body poses a significant health risk and is strongly advised against.

- The funeral director will transfer your loved one to their facilities
If your loved one passes away overseas

- Cremation will almost certainly have to take place as it's unlikely the body will be able to be returned to Aotearoa at this time.
- Your loved one’s ashes may be repatriated at a later time when border controls return to normal.

Travel for tangihanga

- Only whānau who have been in the same isolation bubble as the tūpāpaku will be allowed to go to the cemetery for burial.
- Strict travel restrictions are still in place. Whānau must use their own vehicles or authorised essential transport services
- As soon as burial is complete, or as soon as whānau have received their loved one’s ashes, they must return straight home.

Protecting everyone in your isolation bubble

- Anyone who is unwell, even mildly so, must remain home.
- Whānau who are at higher risk of COVID-19 must also stay home during this time. This includes kaumātua, pregnant women, whānau who are immune-compromised, have cancer or pre-existing conditions like cardiovascular disease, respiratory issues, kidney problems, diabetes or high blood pressure.

Cremation

- Although you may not be used to cremation, it is an option you might want to think about if you want to return your loved one to their whānau urupā once the Level 4 status is lifted.
- Be prepared for the fact that your loved one’s ashes might not be able to be returned to you until after the pandemic response is over.

Honouring your loved one

- Once whānau know the time of the burial, you might want to hold a service at that same time in your own home with the whānau you are in isolation with.
- You could also livestream this service to other whānau and friends. You could use Facebook Live, Skype, Zoom, Facetime or another online platform.
- Once we recover from this pandemic, your whānau can come together to honour your loved one. If your whānau member was cremated, you might want to bury their ashes at a whānau urupā. If they were buried immediately, you could hold a service at the burial grounds. These are just some of the ways you might choose to remember your lost loved one.

Getting support

- We encourage whānau to use the services of their Police Iwi Liaison Officers, their local kaiwhakarite and their deceased loved one’s health providers.
- Grieving is never easy – and will be particularly hard during this time. If you feel you are not coping, it is important to talk with a health professional. For support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text 1737 – free, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – to talk with a trained counsellor.