



Governor Doug A Ducey

Arizona State Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers

www.funeralboard.az.gov

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March 31, 2020

Ursula Nelson
Director-Department of Environmental Quality
Pima County
33 N. Stone Ave., Suite 700
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Dear Ms. Nelson,

In an effort to be prepared during the COVID-19 crisis, I am requesting that a waiver of county code 17.16.170.A: Nighttime Combustion, be drafted and ready to be activated as soon as the need arises. When crematories are not able to keep up with the demands as a direct result of the ever increasing COVID-19 cases, I ask that you be ready to lift the ban in order to relieve any backlog of decedents waiting for cremation.

A mass fatality, by definition, is any situation where more deaths occur than can be handled by local resources. In events such as we are experiencing with COVID-19, partnerships with other agencies, and organizations involved in response is essential. Effective planning and preparation are foundational to building sound relationships between such agencies. It is imperative that we achieve and maintain a working relationship for occasions as we are experiencing now and experienced to a lesser degree in October of 2017 when the new electronic death registration system was implemented.

Please understand this request to lift any restriction of nighttime combustion for crematories does not come lightly. The rational is always to ensure the dead are cared for in the most timely and dignified manner possible, working within the constraints of the situation. Only for a mass fatality situation would a request such as this come into play. We must be prepared to expedite disposition of decedents thereby assisting grieving families as efficiently as possible. It would be my recommendation to lift the ban, when needed, for a period of 30 days at which time the need could be reevaluated and extended if necessary.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time for any questions, concerns or if I can provide further clarification.

Respectfully,

Judith Stapley
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