

Toronto Hebrew Memorial Parks

COVID-19 Pandemic Protocols

effective as of Mar. 23, 2020

Toronto Hebrew Memorial Parks (THMP) is concerned about the health and safety of all individuals visiting our cemeteries, the families whom we service, funeral directors, and our staff. Whether we are declared an essential service or not by government, we view our operations as such. We must therefore take a very aggressive approach to COVID-19 so that we can hopefully continue to operate in these challenging times. In compliance with the CDC, the World Health Organization and protocols determined by our federal, provincial, and local governments, THMP continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation.

Effective March 23, 2020, and always subject to change, THMP will be operating according to the following protocols:

Our Cemeteries:

THMP cemeteries will remain open to the public for graveside funerals and monument unveilings based on our regular hours. We are strongly discouraging all other types of visits to the cemeteries.

Burial and Monument Unveiling Services:

We will continue to perform all scheduled graveside burials at the cemeteries, and allow for monument unveiling services, subject to specific protocols regarding social distancing, protections for attendees and THMP staff and limitations regarding gatherings (currently a maximum of 20 people, not including clergy, THMP staff or the funeral chapel staff). At this time, our public washrooms at both cemeteries, and our Assembly Hall at Pardes Shalom Cemetery, will not be accessible to the public. Funeral Homes working with THMP will be updated regarding changes to our COVID-19 protocols.

THMP Administrative Office:

Our Administrative Office will be closed for the time being. The public may still contact us by using e-mail at info@thmp.ca or by telephone at 416.631.5697 as opposed to in-person visits. THMP will not be scheduling appointments or meetings at our offices until further notice.

THMP reserves the right to modify these protocols at any time. We appreciate your co-operation as we do our best to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 while at the same time servicing the Community in these challenging times.

THMP COVID-19 Protocols for Interments and Monument Unveilings

THMP will continue to permit graveside funeral services and monument unveiling services, subject to the following requirements:

1. All visits to the cemeteries are to be discouraged for the time being, with the exception of an attendance at a graveside funeral service or a monument unveiling service.
2. The graveside service and unveiling service must be entirely completed within 30 minutes.
3. All attendees at any service must stand at least 6 feet away from the grave, with a social distance of at least 6 feet apart.
4. All attendees at funeral services must sign a register and provide contact information should tracing of infection become necessary.
5. Funeral directors and any assistants shall wait until the casket is lowered and the THMP staff have removed the lowering device and have created a social distance of at least 6 feet from the grave before allowing families to congregate at the graveside.
6. Funeral directors and assistants will direct families to create a social distance at graveside of at least 6 feet from one another and will use best efforts to remind families during the service. **At all times, visitors and funeral chapel staff must always remain at least 6 feet away from THMP staff.**
7. Ritual shoveling of dirt during the interment service will be limited only to attendees who are wearing gloves. In other words, no one should seek to handle a shovel if they are not wearing gloves. There will only be two shovels available at the service. **All pallbearers must likewise wear gloves when handling the casket.**
8. Graveside funeral services and **monument unveiling services** shall be limited to a **maximum of 20** individuals permitted (clergy, THMP staff and funeral chapel staff excluded) standing or sitting within a social distance of at least 6 feet from one another.
9. During inclement weather, umbrellas which have been sanitized may be provided by the funeral home.
10. THMP reserves the right to require anyone who is visibly experiencing cold or flu symptoms to return to their vehicle and/or leave the cemetery, and funeral directors are expected to politely request that anyone who is exhibiting such symptoms, including coughing, depart the service and the cemetery grounds immediately. In the event that an individual has been asked to leave the cemetery, the funeral director must notify THMP as soon as possible.

11. To mitigate risk of transmission, we will not be providing any washing cups or water at our outdoor hand washing stations at the cemeteries. Visitors should bring their own water for ritual hand washing after their visits.

These protocols are subject to change at any time. Please contact Howard Mammon, THMP's Executive Director, with any questions.

Thank you very much for your co-operation

Issued: March 20, 2020