

**SIK-E-DAKH**  
A HEALTHY, SAFE POSITIVE COMMUNITY  
THAT IS SELF SUFFICIENT NOW AND  
FOR  
FUTURE GENERATIONS



## **SIK-E-DAKH ( GLEN VOWELL INDIAN RESERVE) COVID -19 FUNERAL PROTOCOLS for PHASE 2**

### **OBJECTIVE:**

To enact a SIK-E-DAKH ( Glen Vowel Indian Reserve) Funeral Protocol to take effect during PHASE 2 of the COVID-19 Crisis. This protocol will help to ensure the safety of Sik-E-Dakh members dealing with funerals during COVID-19. The Funeral Protocol will be lifted when the Provincial Health Officer lifts the restrictions the Provincial State of Emergency.

### **CURRENT SITUATION:**

On March 17, 2020, A Declaration of State of Emergency within the SIK-E-DAKH ( Glen Vowell Indian Reserve) was endorsed by all 5 members of Council, Chief Councilor and the Emergency Operations Centre. In planning for the COVID-19 Crisis it has been identified that a SIK-E-DAKH ( Glen Vowell Indian Reserve) Funeral Protocol is a high priority. As such the following outlines the SIK-E-DAKH ( Glen Vowell Indian Reserve) approach to a funeral during Phase 2 of COVID-19.

Please note: The SIK-E-DAKH ( Glen Vowell Indian Reserve) Funeral Protocol does not supersede any Community protocols or traditions, but should be considered in additional with the more stringent standard being recommended.

# **SIK-E-DAKH ( GLEN VOWELL INDIAN RESERVE) FUNERAL PROTOCOLS – DURING COVID 19**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Traditional Practices**

The Sik-E-Dakh Chief and Council and EOC acknowledge that our community and each individual house have their own traditional practices that they abide by in normal circumstances. During COVID-19 we may not be able to implement these traditional funeral practices, but will need to find unique and innovative ways to adapt our traditions.

### **Mass Gatherings Cancellation**

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 to Elders and/or individual with pre-existing conditions being most at risk for poor outcomes.

### **Difficult Times – Difficult Decisions**

The Sik-E-Dakh Chief and Council and EOC acknowledge this is a difficult time and a funeral during this time is even more traumatic. 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.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROCEEDING WITH FUNERAL AND TRADITIONAL PROTOCOLS DURING COVID-19

1. Although the **Provincial Health Officer in Phase 2** states no gatherings over 50 people, best practices state 5-10 people and these people must practice physical distancing which states no contact within 2 meters of another person. For Phase 2, Sik-E-Dakh Chief and Council and the EOC advise to apply best practice limiting events at the hall to no more than 50 people in attendance with physical distancing measures in place (**keep 6 feet apart**). All attendees will wear facemasks and sanitize their hands as often as needed. (Note: people living in same household are exempt from this 2-meter guideline.) Funeral Location: if possible, have funeral outdoors as there is higher ventilation and greater capacity for separation between attendees outside.
2. **A Celebration of Life** can be held virtually through a life video platform such as Zoom or Facebook Live. Assign an emcee and a technical support person to help set-up the Virtual platform. Arrange to send any pictures to one email address, preferably the person who will put a presentation together. Make sure the Video platform information for joining ( ie. Zoom link) is shared with individuals and on Social Media or people to join.
3. **Attending in person ie. Funeral or Celebration of Life.** Those 50 attending to the funeral practices should not be: sick, in contact with sick people, should not have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days, should not reside with an Elder or somebody with significant chronic disease or children. It is also recommended to reduce those travelling to limited funeral service by means of having only immediate family and/or local community individuals attend.
4. **Avoid Contact:** do not hug, shake hands, or have any human contact in order to limit transmission of COVID-19 **and keep 6 feet apart**. Do not touch your face and cough or sneeze into tissue or the bend of your arm. Dispose of tissue in lined waste baskets followed by proper hand washing. If handwashing is not available, use hand sanitizer.
5. **Public Area Disinfected:** for those limited people taking care of funeral practices at this time, ensure all public areas (bathroom, and common areas) are disinfected throughout the day. It is recommended that Kitchen areas be closed off and communal food not be served. Pay particular attention to surfaces that are touched often and wipe down often with Disinfectant (1:50 bleach disinfectant solution). Limit and monitor entry into washrooms.

6. **Plan for those who become sick on site:** Have Personal Protective Equipment on hand in case somebody becomes sick on site. Have a plan to isolate them and move them to safety to prevent transmission.
7. **Hygiene stations:** have hand sanitizer and hand wash stations with lined waste baskets, soap, and paper towel dispensers on site, hand washing signage to promote proper and constant cleansing of hands.
8. **Mourning Time:** Traditionally mourning occurs within a four-day cycle but during the time of COVID-19 we ask that mourning take place within one day. (may need to be revisited.)
9. **Viewing of the Body:** The Sik-E-Dakh and EOC acknowledge this is a Traditional practice but due to COVID-19 recommend omitting this stage by the family if death is due to COVID-19. Viewing of the Body during COVID-19 unless strict physical distancing measures are in place and enforced. (revisited)
10. **Postpone Feast/Food-**Reschedule for a time in the future or have a Virtual Feast that could be conducted via a Video Platform (Zoom or FB Live), which will only have immediate family members in attendance. Only pre-packaged food and drinks will be served and no tables will be used, except one for the immediate family. Hawal can be done electronically and accepted by Bookkeeper to an assigned account. Expenses for payment will be e-transferred.
11. **Communication:** Ensure that those limited people (recommended 5-10 people) attending the funeral have clear understandings of the COVID-19 funeral protocols and all the precautions that are needed to ensure everybody's safety and to reduce the virus transmission.

## **ADDITIONAL FUNERAL OPTIONS**

**Spiritual Practices:** With physical distancing measures in place and/or as individuals, spiritual practices may be performed such as smudging, cleansing the home, fire keeping in shifts (for the day), offering prayers, drumming/singing individually, connect with Elder via phone, and/or offering medicines.

**Cremation:** Sik-E-Dakh Council and EOC acknowledges that some communities may or may not believe in, and/or practice cremation but we encourage this practice until the COVID-19 Crisis is over.

**Future Ceremonies (FEAST):** The Sik-E-Dakh and EOC recommend that when the Provincial Health Officer cease bans on mass gatherings and it is safe for communities and nation members to gather, that individuals that have passed during the time of the COVID-19 be held up in ceremony as per the direction of BC Health Guidelines.

Any concerns or questions about your health call \*811 or go to [www.fnha.ca/coronavirus](http://www.fnha.ca/coronavirus)

This protocol has been approved by the Sik-E-Dak Chief and Council.

Chief Tony Sampare

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Councilor Robert Sampson

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Councilor Jennifer Sampare

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Councilor Barb Huson

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Councilor Peter Van Tunen

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