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# **THE DEMISE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II: NATIONAL MOURNING GUIDANCE**

Guidance for the public and businesses on the period of National Mourning following the demise of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

P U B L I S H E D   S E P T E M B E R   2 0 2 2

**B**UCKINGHAM PALACE HAS ANNOUNCED THE DEMISE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II. THE STATE FUNERAL OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II WILL BE PRECEDED BY A PERIOD OF LYING-IN-STATE. DATES AND FURTHER DETAILS OF THESE EVENTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED BY THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD IN DUE COURSE.

A PERIOD OF NATIONAL MOURNING FOR HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II HAS NOW STARTED. THE PERIOD OF NATIONAL MOURNING WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE END OF THE DAY OF THE STATE FUNERAL. THE ROYAL FAMILY WILL UNDERTAKE A SEPARATE PERIOD OF ROYAL MOURNING, SUBJECT TO THE WISHES OF THE KING.

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## INTRODUCTION

National Mourning is a period of time for reflection in response to the demise of the Sovereign, or other member of the Royal Family or a very prominent person in national life.

This guide is intended to provide the public, businesses and institutions with an explanation of National Mourning, and outline some practical advice on how you or your organisation may wish to observe public mourning during this period.

It covers, among other matters:

- Half-masting of flags;
- How observing mourning can affect the continuation of business, events and sporting fixtures;
- Floral tributes; and
- Books of condolence.

Nevertheless, mourning is very personal and we anticipate individuals, families, communities and organisations may want to mark Her Majesty's demise in their own way. There is no expectation on the public or organisations to observe specific behaviours during the mourning period.

Public services will continue as usual, although there may be some changes to service availability on the day of the State Funeral.

As well as the UK government, the devolved administrations, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories will be observing National Mourning and will issue separate guidance.

## **FLAGS**

Flags flying from Royal residences, government buildings and military establishments have been half-masted following the demise of Her Majesty.

Businesses or other organisations wishing to pay their respects by half-masting flags or holding silences can follow the guidance that has been issued on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

## **BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICES**

There is no obligation on organisations to suspend business during the National Mourning period. Depending on the nature and location of their business and the tone of planned events, some businesses may wish to consider closing or postponing events, especially on the day of the State Funeral, however this is at the discretion of individual businesses. Public services will continue as usual, although there may be some changes to service availability. Further guidance on any potential considerations relating to the day of the State Funeral will be issued if needed.

## **TRAVEL INFORMATION**

There is no obligation on organisations to suspend business during the National Mourning period. Depending on the nature and location of their business and the tone of planned events, some businesses may wish to consider closing or postponing events, especially on the day of the State Funeral, however this is at the discretion of individual businesses. Public services will continue as usual, although there may be some changes to service availability. Further guidance on any potential considerations relating to the day of the State Funeral will be issued if needed.

## **COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS**

Many community organisations, including places of worship, Local Authorities and charities, will arrange events commemorating the life and service of Her Majesty. This may include holding services of reflection (or similar), as well as opportunities for those with no religious beliefs to pay their respects. Local Authorities will support the coordination of local events so please check with them or your local place of worship for further details.

## **MAJOR EVENTS, ENTERTAINMENT & SPORTS**

There is no obligation to cancel or postpone events and sporting fixtures, or close entertainment venues during the National Mourning period. This is at the discretion of individual organisations.

As a mark of respect, organisations might wish to consider cancelling or postponing events or closing venues on the day of the State Funeral. They are under no obligation to do so and this is entirely at the discretion of individual organisations.

If sporting fixtures or events are planned for the day of the State Funeral, organisations may want to adjust the event timings so they do not clash with the timings of the funeral service and associated processions. As a mark of respect, and in keeping with the tone of National Mourning, organisers may wish to hold a period of silence and/or play the National Anthem at the start of events or sporting fixtures, and players may wish to wear black armbands.

# FLORAL TRIBUTES

It is customary for mourners to leave floral tributes. This section outlines the details of key locations where you can lay flowers and other tributes.

During this time of National Mourning, the government and the Royal Household respectfully request that no official flowers, wreaths, or tributes be sent from organisations to the location of the State Funeral, Royal Residences or government offices.

Within your local community there may be a place, such as a town hall or place of worship, where members of the public can lay flowers or tributes in memory of Her Majesty. Please check the website of your [local authority](#), or local media for further information.

In all locations you should follow the advice and direction of stewards.

<b>London</b>	A memorial flower garden will be created in Green Park tomorrow and will be the main place for laying flowers near Buckingham Palace.
<b>Windsor</b>	Flowers can be laid on the Long Walk at Cambridge Gate close to the town centre. <a href="#">Read further information on the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead website.</a>
<b>Sandringham</b>	Flowers can be laid on the estate and visitors will be directed to the correct location on arrival.
<b>Belfast</b>	Flowers can be laid at Hillsborough Castle. <a href="#">Read further information on the Northern Ireland Office website.</a>
<b>Edinburgh</b>	Flowers can be laid at the Palace of Holyroodhouse. <a href="#">Read further information on the Scottish Government website.</a>
<b>Balmoral</b>	Flowers can be laid at the Main Gate to the Castle. <a href="#">Read further information on the Balmoral Castle website.</a>
<b>Cardiff</b>	Flowers can be laid at the areas either side of the City Hall entrance. <a href="#">Read further information on the Welsh Government website.</a>

# TRIBUTES

Making a donation to one of Her Majesty's many charities and patronages may be considered a fitting way of paying tribute to Her extraordinary legacy. Read further information on how you can donate and a list of Her Majesty's charities and patronages.

## BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE

There are no physical books of condolence at Royal Residences. You can sign an online Book of Condolence on the Royal family website.

There will be opportunities to sign books of condolence at various Town Halls and other locations throughout the UK. Please check with your Local Authority.

### Opening your own Book of Condolence

Any organisation or person may open a book of condolence during the period of National Mourning.

There is no set format for a book of condolence. The layout of the table is usually a trestle table on which the book is placed with a white tablecloth, an arrangement of flowers (usually lilies or other white flowers) and a framed formal photograph of Her Majesty. This could be an official portrait photograph, or one taken at a previous Royal visit. As a mark of respect, a black ribbon could be wrapped around the top right hand corner.

Please note the Royal Household and the government will not be able to receive books of condolence.

## WEBSITES & SOCIAL MEDIA

Online communication channels can also be used to reflect the demise of Her Majesty and participate in the period of National Mourning. Organisations can acknowledge the mourning period by making changes to the homepage of their website, for example, with the use of black edging or black banners.

Organisations and individuals may also wish to share their memories of Her Majesty online. There is no set way to mark the passing of Her Majesty on social media. Organisations may wish to review their planned content for the period.

Any changes to websites or social media pages should take into consideration accessibility requirements for visually impaired users.

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND OFFICIAL PORTRAITS OF HER MAJESTY

It is not necessary to cover or remove existing official portraits or photographs in your organisation of Her Majesty as a mark of respect. It is the custom to leave these in place, at the discretion of the organisation. For example, you will still see in many older public buildings official portraits on display of King George VI and other previous monarchs.

## PUBLIC MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Public museums, galleries or similar venues are not obliged to close during the National Mourning period. Organisations may choose to close on the day of the State Funeral, however there is no obligation to do so and this is at the discretion of individual organisations. As with other organisations, these institutions may wish to display or share images of previous Royal visits, particularly if they are one of Her Majesty's patronages.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please refer to the [Royal Website](#) or [GOV.UK](#).