

Quick Guide to Sitting *Shmira*

REFER TO THE *SHOMRIM* HANDBOOK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

At the beginning of the shift

1. If the *shiva* candle is not lit, use the lighter on the table to light the candle.
2. List your name and *shmira* date and times on the page. You may sign in as "Anonymous" if you wish.
3. Place a *kippah* on your head if not already wearing one. There is a supply of *kippot* and bobby pins/clips in the basket on the table.
4. While standing and facing *the met/metah*, recite the first paragraph of the *Sh'ma*, written below.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד

Sh'ma Yis'ra'eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad.

Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

Recited quietly:

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

Barukh sheim k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed.

Blessed be the Name of God's glorious kingdom forever and ever.

וְאַהַבְתָּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ

V'ahav'ta eit Adonai Elohekha b'khol l'vav'kha uv'khol naf'sh'kha uv'khol m'odekha.

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לִבְבְּךָ

V'hayu had'varim ha'eileh asher anokhi m'tzav'kha hayom al l'vavekha.

And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart.

וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם

V'shinan'tam l'vanekha v'dibar'ta bam

And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them

בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ

b'shiv't'kha b'veitekha uv'lekh't'kha vaderekh uv'shakh'b'kha uv'kumekha

when you sit at home, and when you walk along the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

וְקָשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ

Uk'shar'tam l'ot al yadekha v'hayu l'totafot bein einekha.

And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ

Ukh'tav'tam al m'zuzot beitekha uvish'arekha.

And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

What **TO DO** while sitting *shmira*

Please turn cell phones to mute or off.

Shomrim focus on *shmira* and read or recite from the Book of Job, Psalms, or contemporary texts on spirituality or Jewish traditions on end-of-life and mourning; engage in reflection, meditation, or prayer. It is traditional to read Psalms while sitting *shmira*. Appropriate reading material is provided in the *shmira* room or *shomrim* may bring their own reading material in character and content with the purpose of sitting *shmira*. Some *shomrim* talk to the *met/metah* or read prayers or Psalms to them.

What **TO AVOID** while sitting *shmira*

We ask that *shomrim* not eat; drink; chew gum; vape, smoke, or chew tobacco; take a nap; use cell phones, computers, or other electronic devices (no phone calls, texts, emails, social media, etc.); take pictures or videos; read newspapers, magazines, or novels; do homework or projects for work; and to not engage in small talk if they are sitting with another person. We avoid these activities out of respect for the dead, who can no longer do these things, and it contributes to keeping the room a sacred space while sitting *shmira*.

If you must make or take an urgent phone call, please do so in the hallway outside of the *shmira* room.

At the end of the shift

1. Please leave the room in order. Place books on the bookshelf, place trash in the wastebasket, put the journal in the plastic holder, and return the air bed if used (see "Air bed for *shomrim* sitting overnight" section of the *Shomrim Handbook*).
2. When the next *shomer/shomeret* arrives (or if no one is scheduled after you), recite the following prayer while standing and facing the *met/metah*:

**My God, You have created the soul within me; you have formed it.
You breathed it unto me and you preserve it within me.
So long as my soul is within me, I acknowledge You, O Lord.
My God and God of my ancestors, as Master of all creation,
I pray to You, O Lord, who unites soul and body,
That the soul of the (*met*) (*metah*), whose body I now leave,
Will find rest in Your sheltering care.
Amen.**

3. If wearing a Chevra *kippah*, please leave it in the basket on the table.
4. Follow the instructions posted on the wall over the handwashing station for washing your hands and reciting the blessing over washing hands before you leave the room.
5. **IMPORTANT!** Make sure you have all your possessions before leaving the *shmira* room – keys, purse, cell phone, sweater, jacket or coat, boots, hat, mittens or gloves, any other items you brought with you. This is especially important if you are the last person at night, as the door will lock behind you when you leave and you will not be able to get back in to retrieve items until funeral home staff returns to work the next morning.
6. **IMPORTANT!** The last *shomer/shomeret* leaving at night when funeral home staff is not present **must** blow out the *shiva* candle before leaving. Leaving it burning would create a fire hazard. If funeral home staff is present when leaving, the *shiva* candle does not have to be blown out.