

## Department of Infection Prevention and Hospital Epidemiology (DIPHE)

### Safe Management of Dead Bodies of COVID-19 Suspected or Confirmed Persons

#### Preparing and Packing the Body

- Perform hand hygiene: thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer.
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including gloves, an impervious gown, a surgical mask, goggles or a face shield, to protect the eyes.
- Remove all tubes, drains and catheters attached to the body.
- Wash/bathe (give ghusl) to the body with soap and water. This should be done as soon as possible after the death. There is no need to further disinfect the body.
- Ensure any wounds are covered with waterproof bandages or dressings.
- Ensure that any body fluids leaking from orifices are contained.
- Place the body in a leak-proof plastic bag if there is any excessive fluid leakage.
- Remove all your PPEs and dispose of all items in a covered dustbin.
- Dispose of all infectious waste in a red bag and send for incineration.
- Perform hand hygiene.
- Disinfect all environmental surfaces with 1:3 hypochlorite solution.

#### Mortuary Care

- The mortuary must always be kept clean and properly ventilated.
- Lighting must be adequate.
- The mortuary staff must wear the complete PPE including gloves, an impervious gown, a surgical mask, goggles or a face shield, to protect the eyes.
- Environmental surfaces, where the body has been kept, should first be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with 1:3 hypochlorite solution.

#### Burial by Family Members or for Deaths at Home

- Any person (e.g. a family member or a religious leader) preparing or assisting the deceased (e.g. washing, cleaning or dressing the body, tidying the hair, trimming the nails or shaving) should:
  - Thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Wear gloves, and if available, a gown or an apron, before any contact with the body.
  - Protect their eyes and mouth for any activity that may involve splashing of bodily fluids, by wearing a medical mask, and goggles or a face shield.
  - After the procedure, immediately remove and wash any clothing worn while preparing the body.
  - Thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after preparing the body.
- Family members and others should limit their exposure to the body to as little as possible.
- As few people as possible should be involved in the preparing the body.
- Children, older people over the age of 60 years, and anyone with an underlying health condition, such as respiratory problems, heart disease, diabetes, or compromised immune system, should not be involved in preparing the body or otherwise touch the body.
- No one should not kiss the deceased, or touch it. They may view the body from a minimum distance of 1 meter.
- Physical distancing of at least 1 meter between the people present at the proceedings should be maintained. Other protection measures such as coughing/sneezing etiquettes and hand hygiene must be followed.
- People with respiratory symptoms should try and not participate in the viewing. If they must participate, they should wear a medical mask.
- The number of people present at the viewing should be limited, and all those present should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after the proceedings.
- Those tasked with placing the body in the grave, on the funeral pyre, etc. should wear gloves and wash hands with soap and water once the proceeding is complete.

#### Belongings of the Deceased

- The belongings of the deceased do not need to be burned or otherwise disposed of. However, they should be handled with gloves and cleaned with detergent, followed by disinfection with a solution of at least 70% ethanol or 0.1% (1000 ppm) bleach.
- Clothes and linen belonging to the deceased should be machine washed with warm water at 60–90°C (140–194°F) and laundry detergent.
- If machine wash is not possible, clothes and linen can be soaked in hot water with soap in a large drum. A large stick should be used to stir and splashes should be avoided. The drum should then be emptied, and the clothes and linen should be soaked in 0.05% chlorine for approximately 30 minutes. Finally, they should be rinsed with clean water and allowed to dry fully in sunlight.

Source: [World Health Organization](#)