

USAID MTaPS PROGRAM: COVID-19 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Procedures for Handling Bodies of Deceased Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients

Follow standard infection prevention control practices at all times. These include:

- Hand hygiene
 - Using personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., water-resistant apron, gloves, masks, eyewear)
 - Safe handling of sharps and infectious waste
 - Disinfecting bag or sheets housing the dead body, instruments, and devices used on the patient
 - Disinfecting linen and cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces
1. Staff PPE
Staff must make sure they are fully protected by wearing work clothes, disposable surgical caps, disposable gloves and thick rubber gloves with long sleeves, protective face shields, work shoes or rubber boots, waterproof boot covers, waterproof aprons or waterproof isolation gowns, etc.
 2. Corpse Care
 - Prepare the body for transfer, including removal of all lines, catheters, and other tubes.
 - Ensure that any body fluids leaking from orifices are contained.
 - Keep both the movement and handling of the body to a minimum.
 3. Wrapping
 - Wrap body in cloth and transfer it as soon as possible to the mortuary area.
 - It is not necessary to disinfect the body before transfer to the mortuary area.
 - Body bags are not necessary, although they may be used for other reasons (e.g., excessive body fluid leakage).
 - Families are encouraged to work with their community, cultural, and religious leaders and funeral home staff on how to reduce their exposure as much as possible.
 4. Transportation
 - No special transport equipment or vehicle is required.
 - Hospital isolation-ward staff shall transfer the body via the contaminated area to the special elevator (or dedicated passage), out of the ward, and then directly to a specified location for final treatment and disposal (cremation, burial) as soon as possible.
 5. Final Disinfection
 - After transfer of the body to mortuary/cremation/burial, the staff shall decontaminate the vehicle with 1% sodium hypochlorite or 1,000 mg/L chlorine-containing disinfectant or wipes with effective chlorine.
 - Perform final disinfection of the ward, elevator or passage, and mortuary reception areas by using 1,000 mg/L chlorine-containing disinfectant or wipes with effective chlorine.

REFERENCES

CDC. Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html#adhere>

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The USAID Medicines, Technologies, and Pharmaceutical Services (MTaPS) program helps low- and middle-income countries to strengthen their pharmaceutical systems, pivotal to better health outcomes and higher-performing health systems. The program is implemented by a consortium of global and local partners, led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), a global health nonprofit.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

MTaPS COVID-19 Team | mtaps-hqcovid19@mtapsprogram.org