

LET'S STOP THE SPREAD

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR THE HANDLING OF HUMAN REMAINS WITH COVID-19 IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Equipment and materials

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Eye protection such as goggles or a visor, gown and waterproof apron, medical/surgical mask, and non-sterile gloves.
- Disinfectant: At least 70% alcohol or 0.5% (5 000 ppm) bleach (sodium hypochlorite) solution (1 cup (250 ml) bleach to 6 cups water).
- Body bags for double bagging.
- Red healthcare waste bags for double bagging of waste and disposable PPE.

Important notice: For unnatural deaths contact Forensic Pathology Service.

Step-by-step guide:

1. Contact the relevant Environmental Health Practitioner (EHP) in the municipal district to ensure that the handling of the human remains is strictly monitored throughout the process.
2. Contact the contracted undertaker who is responsible for the removal of the human remains from the healthcare facility to the undertaker's premises.
3. The undertaker must be present when the body is being disinfected and prepared for removal.
4. Ensure that you are wearing appropriate PPE before handling the body of a deceased.
5. Ensure that the undertaker staff is wearing appropriate PPE as they might need to assist.
6. A 70% alcohol disinfectant spray or a 0.5% (5 000 ppm) bleach solution must be available during the process.
7. Spray down the front, back, and sides of the body (and clothing/gown) with the alcohol or bleach solution.
8. Place the body in a body bag and seal.
9. Remove the linen from the bed and properly discard these into a soluble linen bag and as soon as possible transfer to the Laundry for further management as per approved linen policy.
10. Extremely soiled linen which cannot be sluiced at a Central and Private Laundry needs to be managed as Health Care Risk Waste (HCRW).
11. Spray the outer surface of the first body bag with the alcohol or bleach solution.
12. Change gloves and sanitize hands.
13. Put on a pair of clean gloves.
14. Prepare the second body bag by placing it on the undertaker's stretcher. Ensure that someone is keeping the trolley secure and stable.
15. Put the first body bag into the second body bag and seal.
16. Spray the second bag with the alcohol or bleach solution
17. Keep the outside of the second body bag free of contamination.
18. The appropriate BIOHAZARD warning tag indicating "Hazard Group 3 Pathogens" must be attached on the outside of the second body bag.
19. Spray down the wheels and any other surface of the undertaker's stretcher that may have been contaminated, before leaving the area.
20. Remove PPE and place the disposable items in a red bag and seal with cable ties for hazardous medical waste disposal and keep it separate from all other medical waste. Mark all bags for easy identification.
21. Place the above in another red bag, cable tie and mark as COVID-19.
- 22.. Perform hand hygiene.

