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Government of Punjab
Department of Health and Family Welfare,
Parivar Kalyan Bhawan, Sec 34-A, Chandigarh

To,

1. All Deputy Commissioners of Punjab.
2. All Civil Surgeons of Punjab.
3. All SSPs of Punjab.

No. IDSP/NHM/PS/20/223-88

Dated, Chandigarh 5/4/2020

Sub: Guidelines on Dead Body Management COVID -19.

Reference subject mentioned above the following guidelines are to be followed for handling of dead body of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

1. Key Facts

- The main driver of transmission of COVID-19 is through droplets. There is unlikely to be an increased risk of COVID infection from a dead body to health workers or family members who follow standard precautions while handling body.

2. Standard Precautions to be followed by health care workers while handling dead bodies of COVID.

These include:

- Hand hygiene.
- Use of personal protective equipment (e.g., water resistant apron, gloves, masks, eyewear).
- Safe handling of sharps.
- Disinfect outside bag housing dead body.
- Disinfect linen.
- Clean and disinfect environmental surfaces.

3. Removal of the body from the isolation room or area

- The health worker attending to the dead body should perform hand hygiene; ensure proper use of PPE (water resistant apron, goggles, N95 mask, gloves).
- Place the dead body in leak-proof plastic body bag. The exterior of the body bag can be decontaminated with 1% hypochlorite. The body bag can be wrapped with a mortuary sheet or sheet provided by the family members.
- The body will be handed over to relatives/district administration for performing last rites or for taking to the mortuary.
- The leak-proof plastic body bag containing the dead body should not be opened in the hospital premises or during transportation to the crematorium /burial ground.
- All medical waste must be handled and disposed of in accordance with Bio-medical waste management rules.

4. Environmental cleaning and disinfection

All surfaces of the isolation area (floors, bed, railings, side tables, IV stand, etc.) should be wiped with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite solution; allow a contact time of 30 minutes, and then allowed to air dry.

5. Handling of dead body in Mortuary

- Mortuary staff handling COVID dead body should observe standard precautions.
- Dead bodies should be stored in cold chambers maintained at approximately 4°C.
- The mortuary must be kept clean. Environmental surfaces, instruments and transport trolleys should be properly disinfected with 1% Hypochlorite solution.
- After removing the body, the chamber door, handles and floor should be cleaned with sodium hypochlorite 1% solution.

6. Embalming

- Embalming of dead body should not be allowed.

7. Transportation

- The body, secured in a body bag, exterior of which is decontaminated poses no additional risk to the staff transporting the dead body.
- The personnel handling the body may follow standard precautions (surgical mask, gloves).
- The vehicle, after the transfer of the body to cremation/ burial staff, will be decontaminated with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite.

8. At the crematorium/ Burial Ground

- One health staff to supervise the body at burial/cremation ground and ensure that last rites are performed following COVID19 dead body management guideline.
- The crematorium/ burial ground staff should be sensitized that COVID 19 does not pose additional risk.
- The staff will practice standard precautions of hand hygiene, use of masks and gloves.
- Viewing of the dead body by unzipping the face end of the body bag (by the staff using standard precautions) may be allowed, for the relatives to see the body for one last time if the family desires.
- Religious rituals such as reading from religious scripts, sprinkling holy water and any other last rites that does not require touching of the body can be allowed.
- Bathing, kissing, hugging, etc. of the dead body should not be allowed.
- The funeral/ burial staff and family members should perform hand hygiene after cremation/ burial.
- Large gathering at the crematorium/ burial ground should be avoided as a social distancing measure as it is possible that close family contacts may be symptomatic and/ or shedding the virus.
- The ash does not pose any risk and can be collected to perform the last rites.


Director, Health and Family Welfare, Punjab.

No. 5081/NHM/PS/20/2184-96

Dated, Chandigarh 5/4/2020

A copy of the above is forwarded to the following for information:-

- 1) PS/ Chief Secretary to Govt. of Punjab.
- 2) PS/ Additional Chief Secretary Home, Punjab.
- 3) PS/ Principal Secretary Health & Family Welfare, Punjab.
- 4) PS/ Secretary Medical Education and Research, Punjab.
- 5) PA/ Mission Director, National Health Mission, Punjab.
- 6) PA/ Managing Director, Punjab Health Systems Corporation, Punjab.
- 7) Director Medical Education & Research, Punjab.
- 8) Director ESI, Punjab.


Director, Health and Family Welfare, Punjab.