

GUIDANCE FOR HANDLING BODY FOLLOWING DEATH FROM COVID-19 MUSLIM DEATHS

For further information:

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PRECAUTION AND DEAD BODY CARE

Handling the Deceased

- All dead bodies must have been identified and correctly labelled with identity labels and risk category tags.
- Move the body as prepared by the mortuary staff.
- **Observe strict personal hygiene and put on appropriate PPE, disposable gloves, masks and apron.**
- The outside of the body bag (if used) should be disinfected and wiped.
- Once the body is transported, wipe down the stretcher and the inside section of the van with 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4 parts of water) and allow to air dry.
- Remove PPE after handling of the dead body. Then, wash hands up to elbows with liquid soap and water immediately.

NOTE:

New/recently issued guidance available on NBC website:

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND - 31.03.2020

Guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE – 27.03.2020

Coronavirus – modification to registration process

CHIEF CORONER GUIDANCE – 26.03.2020

Coroners Guidance – COVID-19

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PATHOLOGIST AND AAPT – 19.03.2020

TRANSMISSION-BASED PRECAUTIONS

BIMA and NBC 30.03.2020

PATHWAY TO FOLLOW FOR PREPARING DECEASED DURING COVID PANDEMIC

NBC advisers include:

Professor Alimuddin Zumla, Dr Osman Dar (Public Health England), Dr Shuja Shafi, Dr Ahmed Shehzad (Manchester Foundation Hospital Trust), Maulana Yunus Dudhwala (Head of Chaplaincy, Barts Health NHS Trust), Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt (Institute of Islamic Jurisprudence), Sheikh Abu Eesa Niamatullah (Al-Maghrib), Maulana Zubair Baiyat (Gardens of Peace)

PREPARING THE BODY FOR BURIAL

WASHING THE BODY (GHUSL)

- Avoid direct contact with blood or bodily fluids.
- Make sure the mouth and any wounds/leaks are covered with waterproof bandage/mask.
- **DO NOT REMOVE** any tubes, catheters, etc.
- Observe strict personal hygiene and put on appropriate PPE: **(Fluid-resistant surgical mask, apron or full-sleeved gown, gloves, goggles or face visor, beard cover, head cover, shoe cover and, if possible, long gloves.)**
- Ensure the washing area is fit for purpose, well-ventilated and with adequate drainage.
- Ghush performers to be fully trained in ghush and in donning and doffing PPE.
- Wash the body as normal (Sunnah ghush) where possible. However, keep movement of the body to a minimum. If a hose is being used, apply water with moderate force under the towel to wash away any impurities from the private areas without touching.
- If the above is not possible, pour water over the entire body thrice (once is also sufficient) and this will discharge the obligation of ghush.
- **Avoid spraying water** – use bucket and jug to minimise any splashes.
- **Where adequate facilities are unavailable, there are no appropriately trained ghush performers thereby increasing the risk of infection, the required PPE is unavailable or the body bag cannot be opened, refer to a reliable scholar for advice on the validity of resorting to tayammum or even burial without ghush or tayammum.**

ADVISABLE PRECAUTIONS:

- Keep the numbers of people performing ghush to the minimum required.
- Our advice is to avoid close family members participating in Covid-19 ghushs.
- People aged 60 or over with underlying health conditions, pregnant women and those that have been in contact with anyone with Covid-19 should not participate in the ghush.
- **Not all Covid-19 deaths are certified as such. It is therefore advisable to use the PPE and infection control measures set out here with any suspected case.**
- Ghush performers should remove the PPE, discard and disinfect. All surfaces that may be contaminated should be wiped with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 49 parts of water), leave it for 15-30 minutes, and then rinse with water.

SHROUDING

- **Shroud the body as normal.**
- **If the body bag cannot be opened, the shroud may be applied over the body bag. The body bag itself can also suffice, if need be.**
- Where a coffin is used, place the shrouded body in the coffin and close the lid.
- Observe PPE and under no circumstances touch the body or shroud without gloves.
- Wipe and disinfect the outside of the coffin and allow to air dry.

PREPARING THE BODY FOR FUNERAL

PAYING LAST RESPECTS

- Viewing may be arranged in mortuary parlour via the mortuary. Family members will need to use appropriate PPE.

ADVISABLE PRECAUTIONS:

It may be very difficult to facilitate viewing and this should be avoided if at all possible.

JANAZAH/BURIAL

- **Janazah Prayer can take place as normal subject to restrictions in force. i.e. open to immediate family members only, local cemetery restrictions on number of mourners and social distancing measures.**
- It is advisable to perform the Janazah at the cemetery.
- Please check with local cemetery for any restrictions on non-coffin burials.
- Those handling the coffin should wear appropriate PPE.

NOTE: The National Burial Council (NBC) is an umbrella organisation of Muslim funeral organisations in the UK.

NBC are leading discussions on behalf of the organisations with the government and Public Health England.

The above is based on revised guidance by Public health England for Care of the Deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (Covid-19) issued on 31st March 2020

The government guidance states the emerging evidence base on COVID-19 is rapidly evolving and this guidance will be updated as new evidence emerges. We will also review this guidance accordingly.

Please note that, should there be increase in the number of deaths, it may result in delays with the burial process. Please respect all parties who are doing the best they can and observe patience.

Should you have any queries please contact us and we will try and assist in the best way possible. The guidance given here is generic. For specific guidance, you may contact your regional NBC contacts.