



Infection Prevention and Control for Deceased Patient Management in the Context of COVID-19* (Interim Guidance)

Transport

Transporters (Guest Services) and Decedent Affairs personnel shall wear PPE as required by Standard Precautions during transport and handling of the body (nitrile gloves, gown, surgical mask and face shield or goggles).

Bodies of patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 must be placed in a body bag. The outside of the body bag must be disinfected with an EPA approved cleaner after the patient has been placed in the bag and prior to transport from the unit. Label the outside of the body bag with the YELLOW infectious disease tag. Appropriate patient identification must be visible on the outside of the body bag and identification must be confirmed before zipping the body bag.

Move the body bag containing decedent onto the transport gurney with the assistance of transport personnel.

Communication

Hospitals and long-term care facilities that have a death in a person suspected or known to be infected with COVID-19 must notify the Jefferson County Medical Examiner's Office of that death and infection status by telephone.

A staff member who was directly responsible for the medical care of the patient at the time of the death shall call the Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office at 205-930-3603:

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am–3:00 pm, select option #1 (operator)

After hours and weekends, select option #3 (report a death)

Viewing and Bereavement

Whenever possible, viewing by family is best managed in the clinical setting with the support of caregivers. If viewing is requested after the body has been transferred to the UAB Morgue (HSB), the viewing is limited to one family member. The Decedent Affairs Office must be contacted prior to the viewing at 205.934.9844. The family member must be accompanied by a representative from the UAB Chaplain's Service. The Bereavement area in HSB allows for viewing behind glass doors. These doors must remain closed for infection prevention reasons. The body bag will be unzipped, and the body displayed by morgue personnel with minimal manipulation. Family members will not be able to touch the patient. Family viewer (1 per family) and Chaplain should retain any PPE previously provided. If needed, family viewer and Chaplain will be provided with a mask and gloves as supplies last to protect both the family and the morgue staff.

Release to Funeral Home

The morgue is staffed 24/7 with only limited staffing after routine hours to release bodies to funeral homes. Funeral home personnel may inquire about the infectious status of the deceased patient prior to transport.

Postmortem Care – Other Information*

Nasal swabs may be collected postmortem by clinical staff for COVID-19 testing.

Do NOT remove therapeutic interventions such as IV's, tracheal tubes, chest tubes, drains, gastric tubes, thermometer probes, EKG pads, defibrillator pads, bandages and other dressings. Chest tubes may be clamped and removed from the drainage container.

Remove bags of IV medication if the medication contains scheduled or hazardous drugs.

If needed, an absorptive pad may be placed underneath the decedent to absorb fluid.

There is no need to wrap or bind the wrists, ankles or jaws or tape the eyes

*Contains exceptions to the current Interdisciplinary policy, *Death Care*

Reference:

Collection and Submission of Postmortem Specimens from Deceased Persons with Known or Suspected COVID-19, March 2020 (Interim Guidance)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-postmortem-specimens.html>

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