COVID-19/MOST URGENT/ACTIONABLE

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, SIRSA

Endst. No. 11-267/1968-79 /LFA Dated:-

A copy of letter endst. No. ADULT/Admn./2020/26227 dated 29.04.2020 (alongwith enclosures) regarding designation/identification of cremation/burial grounds for the disposal of COVID-19 affected dead bodies received from the ACS to Govt. Haryana, Urban Local Bodies Department is forwarded to the following for information & immediate necessary action:-

1. All SDMs in district Sirsa
2. Civil Surgeon, Sirsa
3. Dy. Civil Surgeon (NHM), Sirsa
4. Sr. Drugs/Drugs Control Officer, Sirsa
5. EOs/Secretaries of all ULBs in district Sirsa

For Deputy Commissioner, Sirsa

CC:
1. DIG-SP, Sirsa
2. DRO, Sirsa
3. DIPRO, Sirsa
4. Duty Magistrates in urban areas (through concerned SDMs)
5. All respective members of Local/Sector/Zonal Committees in Urban Areas
6. Incharge, District War/Control Room, Sirsa
7. DIO, NIC, Sirsa
From
Additional Chief Secretary to Government of Haryana,
Urban Local Bodies Department,
Chandigarh.

To
1. All the Commissioners of Municipal Corporations in the State of Haryana.
2. All the Civil Surgeons in the State of Haryana.
3. All the Executive Officers/Secretaries of Municipal Councils/Committees in the State of Haryana.
Memo No. ADULB/Admn./2020/26225
Dated: 29.04.2020

Subject:- Designation/identification of cremation/burial grounds for the disposal of COVID-19 affected dead bodies.

In supersession of earlier letters and orders/instructions regarding designation of cremation/burial grounds, it is hereby intimated that following fresh guidelines be strictly implemented for disposal for COVID-19 affected dead bodies:

(i) COVID-19 affected dead bodies shall be cremated/buried at any cremation/burial ground as desired by the family members of the deceased. The concerned Civil Surgeon then will inform the designated Nodal Officer of respective Municipality to carry out the funeral of the dead body at the cremation/burial ground as decided by his/her family members.

(ii) In case of unclaimed COVID-19 affected dead bodies, Nodal Officer of concerned Municipality shall ensure the funeral of dead body at any cremation/burial grounds in view of convenience and timely disposal of these dead bodies in coordination with the concerned Civil Surgeon.

(iii) The funeral in all cases shall be carried out scientifically only by the designated team of the Municipality by following the guidelines circulated by ICMR in respect of COVID-19 affected dead bodies.

(iv) All Civil Surgeons and Municipal Officers shall strictly follow the procedure regarding handing of COVID-19 affected dead bodies as circulated earlier by Health Department vide Order No. 847-1250/COVID/2020 dated 06.04.2020 and this office letter No. ADULB/Admn./2020/25236 dated 06.04.2020 (copies enclosed).

(v) Further, all the Municipalities are directed to ensure that sufficient & specified quantity of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits including face masks, hand gloves, cover suits etc. have been provided to each & every member of the teams entrusted with the disposal/cremation/burial of COVID-19 affected dead bodies as well as items required for cremation/burial of the dead bodies are made available at the cremation/burial grounds.

2. Strict compliance of the above said directions be ensured by all concerned.

Endst. No. ADULB/Admn./2020/26226
A copy of above is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action please:-
1. Additional Chief Secretary to Government of Haryana, Health Department.
2. Director General, Health Services, Haryana, Panchkula.

Additional Director (Admn.)
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana,
Urban Local Bodies Department.
Dated: 29.04.2020

Additional Director (Admn.)
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana,
Urban Local Bodies Department.
Endst. No. ADULB/Admn./2020/26227

A copy of above is forwarded to all the Deputy Commissioners for information and necessary action please.

Dated: 29.04.2020

Additional Director (Admn.)

for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana,

Urban Local Bodies Department.

CC:-

1. PS/ULBM.
2. SPS/ACSULB.
3. PA/DGULB.
GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
***
ORDER

In exercise of power conferred by the Haryana Epidemic Disease, COVID-19, Regulation, 2020 under the Epidemic Disease Act-1897 and in continuation to the earlier order vide Letter No.546-846/COVID/2020 dated 04.04.2020. Now, it is imperative to fix roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in COVID dead body management and to define the process. Therefore, the due process is hereby defined as follows:-

I. In case of COVID death occurred at hospital:-

- The hospital shall inform concerned Civil Surgeon regarding death and then Civil Surgeon shall inform concerned District Magistrate and Commissioner/EO/Secretary of ULB, as case may be.
- Hospital should decide whether to carry out Autopsy or not.
- Hospital should store the body in the mortuary after ensuring proper disinfection of the body and the body bag as per the guidelines;
- Hospital should provide trained healthcare worker to handle and pack body.
- Hospital should provide Hearse Van to carry, the body to the Cremation/burial ground to ensure that no further infecting is caused.
The trained Health Care worker should accompany the Hearse Van.

The trained health care worker should wear proper protective gears all the time as per protocol.

Once dead body sent to cremation/burial ground by hospital, it is the responsibility of concerned ULB to dispose of dead body strictly as per guidelines/protocol of MoHFW, GoI.

The Hearse Van used must be brought back to the hospital and disinfected as per the protocol before letting it go.

II. In case, COVID death occurred outside Health Care Facility:-

The relatives of COVID deceased shall inform concerned Civil Surgeon regarding death, then Civil Surgeon will designate a hospital for this purpose and also, inform immediately concerned District Magistrate and Commissioner/ EO/ Secretary of ULB, as case may be.

Hospital should decide whether to carry out Autopsy or not.

Hospital should store the body in the mortuary after ensuring proper disinfection of the body and the body bag as per the guidelines;

Hospital should provide trained healthcare worker to handle and pack body.
- Hospital should provide Hearse Van to carry, the body to the Cremation/burial ground to ensure that no further infecting is caused.

- The trained Health Care worker should accompany the Hearse Van.

- The trained health care worker should wear proper protective gears all the time as per protocol.

- Once dead body sent to cremation/burial ground by hospital, it is the responsibility of concerned ULB to dispose of dead body strictly as per guidelines/protocol of MoHFW, GoI.

- The Hearse Van used must be brought back to the hospital and disinfected as per the protocol before letting it go.

Apart from above, the guidelines/protocol of MoHFW, GoI be followed strictly

RAJEEV ARORA, IAS
Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana, Health Department.

Endst. No.847-1250 /COVID/2020 Dated: 06/04/2020

A copy along with the guidelines on dead body management issued by Directorate General of Health Services (EMR Division) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action:

1. The Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Haryana.
2. All the Administrative Secretaries to the Govt. of Haryana.
3. All the Heads of the Departments in the state of Haryana.
4. All the Managing Directors/Chief Administrators of Boards/Corporations in the State of Haryana.
5. The Registrar, Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh.
6. The Registrars of all the Universities in the State of Haryana.
7. All the Divisional Commissioners in the State of Haryana.
8. All the Deputy Commissioners in the State of Haryana.
9. All the Commissioners of Police in the State of Haryana.
10. All the Superintendents of Police in the State of Haryana.
11. All Commissioners of Municipal Corporations in the State of Haryana.
12. All Executive Officers of Municipal Councils in the State of Haryana.
13. All Secretaries of Municipal Committees in the State of Haryana.
14. All Civil Surgeons in the State of Haryana.

Ashok Kumar Meena, IAS
Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration Haryana
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana,
Health Department
From
Additional Chief Secretary to Government of Haryana,
Urban Local Bodies Department,
Chandigarh.

To
1. All the District Magistrates in the State of Haryana.
2. All the Commissioners of Municipal Corporations in the State of Haryana.
3. All the Civil Surgeons in the State of Haryana.
4. All the Executive Officers/Secretaries of Municipal Councils/Committees in the State of Haryana.

Memo No. ADULB/Admin./2020/25236
Dated: 06.04.2020

Subject:- Disposal of COVID-19 affected dead bodies as per guidelines/protocol issued by Directorate General of Health Services (EMR Division) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

In continuation to this office memo No. ADULB/Admin./2020/25219 dated 04.04.2020 and Order Nos. 546-846/COVID/2020 & 847-1250/COVID/2020 dated 04.04.2020 & 06.04.2020 respectively issued by Health Department, Haryana on the subject cited above (copies enclosed).

2. COVID-19 has taken pandemic proportions in many countries and in view of the seriousness of the matter and emergency like situation created by spread of this disease all over the world, Government of India and State Government have taken several pre-emptive measures to contain this disease. It is necessary to handle the situation at every level to combat this situation arising out of the spread/possible spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

3. There is unlikely to be an increased risk of COVID-19 infection from a dead body to healthcare workers, municipal/cremation/burial ground staff or family members while handling the COVID-19 affected dead bodies. Respect for the deceased and the bereaved family should be maintained and local customs be also honoured. All communities have systems for cremation and disposal of remains of the dead. It is important to integrate these into pandemic planning. A safe and cautious mechanism has to be put in place to avoid further spread of disease. Health Department, Urban Local Bodies Department and District Administration have to play a vital role for the implementation of subject cited guidelines (copy enclosed) to prevent any further spread of COVID-19 from dead bodies.

4. The role & responsibilities of all the Departments are required to be described clearly and whereas both Departments have to work in collaboration with each other and perform their duties simultaneously.

The roles and responsibilities of both the Departments are defined as under:-

(A) **Role & Responsibility of Health Department:-**

The roles & responsibilities of Health Department are as under:-

i. Sensitization & training to all health care workers/staff regarding handling of COVID-19 affected dead body.

ii. Providing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all the health care workers who are handling the COVID-19 infected dead body.

iii. Arrangement of leak-proof body bag for COVID-19 infected dead bodies.

The following SOP be followed for death occurred at hospital & outside health care facility:-

(a) **For Death occurred at hospital due to COVID-19 virus infection:-**

i. Hospital should provide trained healthcare worker to handle and pack body.

ii. Hospital should store the body in the mortuary after ensuring proper disinfection of the body and body bag as per the guidelines.
iii. Hospital should provide trained healthcare worker to handle and pack body ensuring proper disinfection of the body and body bag as per the guidelines.

iv. Hospital should decide whether to carry out Autopsy or not.

v. Hospital shall provide Hearse Van to carry the body to the cremation/burial ground to ensure that no further infection is caused.

vi. The Trained healthcare worker should accompany the Hearse Van.

vii. The Trained healthcare worker should wear proper protective gears all the time as per protocol.

viii. The Hearse Van used must be brought back to the hospital and disinfected as per the protocol before letting it go.

(b) For deaths at outside health care facility due to COVID-19 virus infection:-

i. The relatives of COVID-19 deceased shall inform concerned Civil Surgeon regarding death, then Civil Surgeon will designate a hospital for this purpose and also inform immediately inform the office of District Magistrate of the area of jurisdiction.

ii. Hospital should decide whether to carry out Autopsy or not.

iii. Hospital should store the body in the mortuary after ensuring proper disinfection of the body and body bag as per the guidelines.

iv. Hospital should provide trained healthcare worker to handle and pack body ensuring proper disinfection of the body and body bag as per the guidelines.

v. Hospital shall provide Hearse Van along with trained healthcare worker wearing proper protective gear to carry the body to the cremation/burial ground to ensure that no further infection is caused.

vi. The trained healthcare worker should wear proper protective gears all the time as per protocol.

vii. The Hearse Van used must be brought back to the hospital and disinfected as per the protocol before letting it go.

The above mentioned work is to be carried out by the Health care workers strictly as per above mentioned guidelines/protocol.

Further, Civil Surgeon will also designate a Nodal Officer for the above-said work who will be responsible for the speedy completion of formalities and will coordinate with the concerned Municipal officers/officials. The details of Nodal Officer be circulated to concerned District Magistrate as well as Municipality immediately.

(B) Role & Responsibility of Urban Local Bodies Department:-

Urban Local Bodies Department shall issue instructions regarding handling & disposed of COVID-19 affected dead bodies to all its Urban Local Bodies. Urban Local Bodies shall make all the required arrangements for cremation/burial including sensitization of bereaved family as under:-

(a) For Municipal staffs/officials including cremation/burial ground staff

i. Identification of cremation/burial ground for disposal of COVID-19 infected dead bodies. The cremation/burial ground shall be suitably located and preferably be away from residential area. The designated burial ground should not be nearby water sources. There should be one cremation ground in each Municipality, keeping in view the geographical condition & population of the Municipality. Electric Crematorium should be given preference.

There should be atleast one designated burial ground at district/corporation level. However, it may also be at town level in view of the population.

Municipal Commissioners as well as EO/s/Secretaries may designate new site other than the existing cremation/burial ground keeping in view the need and sentiments of the residents of the area.
The identification of cremation as well as burial ground be carried out by considering the fact that it should be nearby hospital/mortuary facility so that funeral can be done without any possible delay.

ii. Constitution of sufficient teams for carrying out funerals. A team shall consist of five members including cremation/burial ground staff and each member will be given a special incentive of Rs. 2000/- per body out of Municipal Funds by the concerned Municipality.

In case the family/relatives of the deceased are unable to bear the cost of funeral ritual, then the concerned Municipality shall bear the actual cost.

The expenditure to be incurred on account of payment of special incentive as well as actual cost of funeral rituals is declared fit charge on the Municipal Fund of the concerned Municipality.

iii. Sufficient & necessary arrangement such as wooden logs, duty for keeping the record of dead bodies, purohit/priest for performing funeral rituals at cremation as well as burial grounds etc. should be made.

iv. Sensitization & training to all Municipal workers/staffs regarding handling of COVID-19 affected dead body at cremation/burial grounds.

v. Providing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all the Municipal workers as well as to purohit/priest who will be performing the funeral rites of COVID-19 infected deceased persons.

(b) **Awareness/Sensitization of the bereaved family:-**

The bereaved family shall be sensitized about the spread of COVID-19 virus through dead body and in view of that following precautions are to be strictly adhered:-

i. Large gathering at the cremation 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.

ii. Children < 10 years, adults > 60 years & immunosuppressed persons should not directly interact with the body and they shall also be prohibited to attend the funeral.

iii. 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.

iv. Bathing, kissing, hugging and embalming of the dead body etc. should not be allowed.

v. Religious rituals such as reading from religious scripts, sprinkling holy water and any other last rites that does not require touching of the dead body can be allowed.

vi. The bereaved family should perform hand hygiene after cremation.

vii. The ash does not pose any risk and can be collected to perform the last rites.

The relevant provisions of Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994 and Haryana Municipal Act, 1973 shall also be followed by the Municipalities.

Further, Municipal Commissioner will designate a responsible Senior Officer of the level of Joint Commissioner or Superintending Engineer/Executive Engineer as a Nodal Officer for the above-said work whereas Executive Officer & Secretary will himself/herself be the Nodal Officer for the aforesaid work in their respective area. The Nodal Officer will be responsible for the speedy completion of formalities and will coordinate with Nodal Officer of Health Department designated by Civil Surgeon as well as bereaved family.

(C) **Role & Responsibility of District Administration:-**

District Administration has to play an important role for ensuring the implementation of the above guidelines as it may create law & order situation, so the sentiments of people be also taken care of properly. The roles & responsibilities are as under:-
i. Supervision and guidance for identification and designation of cremation as well as burial grounds.

ii. Coordination between Officers/Officials of Health Department and Municipalities falling in their respective districts.

iii. Directions for ensuring social distancing for carrying out the funeral rituals by the bereaved family.

iv. Any other measures required to be taken as per need and requirement.

5. Municipal Commissioners as well as Executive Officers/Secretaries are also directed to submit a plan of action with timelines on the Google Form Link on priority basis.

6. This letter is issued with the approval of Hon'ble Urban Local Bodies Minister, Haryana.

7. **Strict compliance of the above guidelines/directions and the relevant Provisions/Rules of the related Acts shall be ensured.**

Encl. As above.

Additional Director (Admn.) 06.04.2020
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. Haryana, Department of Urban Local Bodies.

Endst. No. ADULB/Admn./2020/25237 Dated: 06.04.2020
A copy of above is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action please:-

1. The Chief Secretary to Government of Haryana.
2. All the Divisional Commissioners in the State of Haryana.
3. All the Commissioners of Police in the State of Haryana.
4. All the Superintendents of Police in the State of Haryana.
5. All the Regional Officers, Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Haryana.

Additional Director (Admn.) 06.04.2020
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. Haryana, Department of Urban Local Bodies.

Endst. No. ADULB/Admn./2020/25238 Dated: 06.04.2020
A copy of above is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action please:-

1. Addl. Chief Secretary to Government of Haryana, Health Department.
2. Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration Haryana, Health Department.
3. Director General, Health Services, Haryana, Panchkula, with the request to direct all the Civil Surgeons in the State to ensure the compliance of above directions/instructions.

Additional Director (Admn.) 06.04.2020
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. Haryana, Department of Urban Local Bodies.

CC:-
1. PS/ULBM.
2. SPS/ACSULB.
3. PA/DGULB.
GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

ORDER

Whereas WHO has declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as pandemic, there are more than 17000 persons under the surveillance in Haryana. Therefore, it is imperative to adopt strict measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, which is playing havoc in many countries across the world. The main driver of transmission of COVID-19 is through droplets but it is imperative to follow standard infection prevention control practices while handling dead bodies of COVID.

Whereas the Government of Haryana, in exercise of powers conferred under section 2, 3 and 4 of the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897, has framed the Haryana COVID-19 Regulation, 2020 for prevention and containment of Corona virus disease, 2019.

Therefore, under section 2 of the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897 and regulation made thereof, the Government of Haryana hereby authorizes all Commissioners of Municipal Corporations, all Executive Officers of Municipal Councils and all Secretaries of Municipal Committees to dispose of dead bodies of COVID strictly as per the guidelines/protocol on dead body management issued by Directorate General of Health Services (EMR Division) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The standard infection prevention control practices shall be followed which includes Hand Hygiene, use of personal protective equipment (e.g., water resistant apron, gloves, masks, eyewear), safe handling of sharps, Disinfect bag housing dead body; instruments and devices used on the patient and disinfect linen, Clean and disinfect environmental surfaces. All staff identified to handle dead bodies in the isolation area, mortuary, ambulance and those workers in the crematorium/burial ground should be trained in the infection prevention control practices.
Any person/institution/organization found violating any provision of order shall be deemed to have committed an offence punishable under section 188 of Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860).

RAJEEV ARORA, IAS
Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana, Health Department.

Endst. No. 546-546/COVID/2020

A copy along with the guidelines on dead body management issued by Directorate General of Health Services (EMR Division) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action:-

1. The Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Haryana.
2. All the Administrative Secretaries to the Govt. of Haryana.
3. All the Heads of the Departments in the state of Haryana.
4. All the Managing Directors/ Chief Administrators of Boards/ Corporations in the State of Haryana.
5. The Registrar, Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh.
6. The Registrars of all the Universities in the State of Haryana.
7. All the Divisional Commissioners in the State of Haryana.
8. All the Deputy Commissioners in the State of Haryana.
9. All the Commissioners of Police in the State of Haryana.
10. All the Superintendents of Police in the State of Haryana.
11. All Commissioners of Municipal Corporations in the State of Haryana.
12. All Executive Officers of Municipal Councils in the State of Haryana.
13. All Secretaries of Municipal Committees in the State of Haryana.
14. All Civil Surgeons in the State of Haryana.

Ashok Kumar Meena, IAS
Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration Haryana
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana, Health Department
GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

ORDER

In exercise of power conferred by the Haryana Epidemic Disease, COVID-19, Regulation, 2020 under the Epidemic Disease Act-1897 and in continuation to the earlier order vide Letter No.546-846/COVID/2020 dated 04.04.2020. Now, it is imperative to fix roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in COVID dead body management and to define the process. Therefore, the due process is hereby defined as follows:-

I. In case of COVID death occurred at hospital:-

- The hospital shall inform concerned Civil Surgeon regarding death and then Civil Surgeon shall inform concerned District Magistrate and Commissioner/EO/Secretary of ULB, as case may be.

- Hospital should decide whether to carry out Autopsy or not.

- Hospital should store the body in the mortuary after ensuring proper disinfection of the body and the body bag as per the guidelines;

- Hospital should provide trained healthcare worker to handle and pack body.

- Hospital should provide Hearse Van to carry, the body to the Cremation/burial ground to ensure that no further infecting is caused.
• The trained Health Care worker should accompany the Hearse Van.

• The trained health care worker should wear proper protective gears all the time as per protocol.

• Once dead body sent to cremation/burial ground by hospital, it is the responsibility of concerned ULB to dispose of dead body strictly as per guidelines/protocol of MoHFW, GoI.

• The Hearse Van used must be brought back to the hospital and disinfected as per the protocol before letting it go.

II. In case, COVID death occurred outside Health Care Facility:

• The relatives of COVID deceased shall inform concerned Civil Surgeon regarding death, then Civil Surgeon will designate a hospital for this purpose and also, inform immediately concerned District Magistrate and Commissioner/ EO/ Secretary of ULB, as case may be.

• Hospital should decide whether to carry out Autopsy or not.

• Hospital should store the body in the mortuary after ensuring proper disinfection of the body and the body bag as per the guidelines;

• Hospital should provide trained healthcare worker to handle and pack body.
• Hospital should provide Hearse Van to carry, the body to the Cremation/burial ground to ensure that no further infecting is caused.

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• The trained health care worker should wear proper protective gears all the time as per protocol.

• Once dead body sent to cremation/burial ground by hospital, it is the responsibility of concerned ULB to dispose of dead body strictly as per guidelines/protocol of MoHFW, GoI.

• The Hearse Van used must be brought back to the hospital and disinfected as per the protocol before letting it go.

Apart from above, the guidelines/protocol of MoHFW, GoI be followed strictly

RAJEEV ARORA, IAS  
Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana, Health Department.

Endst. No.847-1250/COVID/2020 Dated: 06/04/2020

A copy along with the guidelines on dead body management issued by Directorate General of Health Services (EMR Division) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, is forwarded to the following for information and necessary action:-

1. The Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Haryana.
2. All the Administrative Secretaries to the Govt. of Haryana.
3. All the Heads of the Departments in the state of Haryana.
4. All the Managing Directors/ Chief Administrators of Boards/ Corporations in the State of Haryana.
5. The Registrar, Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh.
6. The Registrars of all the Universities in the State of Haryana.
7. All the Divisional Commissioners in the State of Haryana.
8. All the Deputy Commissioners in the State of Haryana.
9. All the Commissioners of Police in the State of Haryana.
10. All the Superintendents of Police in the State of Haryana.
11. All Commissioners of Municipal Corporations in the State of Haryana.
12. All Executive Officers of Municipal Councils in the State of Haryana.
13. All Secretaries of Municipal Committees in the State of Haryana.
14. All Civil Surgeons in the State of Haryana.

Ashok Kumar Meena, IAS
Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration Haryana
for Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Haryana,
Health Department
COVID-19: GUIDELINES ON DEAD BODY MANAGEMENT

15.03.2020
1. Scope of the document

- There are currently over 100 laboratory confirmed cases and two deaths due to Novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in India. Being a new disease there is knowledge gap on how to dispose of dead body of a suspect or confirmed case of COVID-19.

- This guideline is based on the current epidemiological knowledge about the COVID-19. India is currently having travel related cases and few cases of local transmission. At this stage, all suspect/confirmed cases will be isolated in a health care facility. Hence the document is limited in scope to hospital deaths.

2. 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.

- Only the lungs of dead COVID patients, if handled during an autopsy, can be infectious.

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

Standard infection prevention control practices should be followed at all times. These include:

1. Hand hygiene.

2. Use of personal protective equipment (e.g., water resistant apron, gloves, masks, eyewear).

3. Safe handling of sharps.
4. Disinfect bag housing dead body; instruments and devices used on the patient.

5. Disinfect linen. Clean and disinfect environmental surfaces.

4. **Training in infection and prevention control practices**

All staff identified to handle dead bodies in the isolation area, mortuary, ambulance and those workers in the crematorium / burial ground should be trained in the infection prevention control practices.

5. **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).
- All tubes, drains and catheters on the dead body should be removed.
- Any puncture holes or wounds (resulting from removal of catheter, drains, tubes, or otherwise) should be disinfected with 1% hypochlorite and dressed with impermeable material.
- Apply caution while handling sharps such as intravenous catheters and other sharp devices. They should be disposed into a sharps container.
- Plug Oral, nasal orifices of the dead body to prevent leakage of body fluids.
- If the family of the patient wishes to view the body at the time of removal from the isolation room or area, they may be allowed to do so with the application of Standard Precautions.
- 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 either handed over to the relatives or taken to mortuary.
- All used/soiled linen should be handled with standard precautions, put in bio-hazard bag and the outer surface of the bag disinfected with hypochlorite solution.
- Used equipment should be autoclaved or decontaminated with disinfectant solutions in accordance with established infection prevention control practices.
- All medical waste must be handled and disposed of in accordance with Biomedical waste management rules.
- The health staff who handled the body will remove personal protective equipment and will perform hand hygiene.
- Provide counseling to the family members and respect their sentiments.

6. 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.

7. 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.
8. Embalming

- Embalming of dead body should not be allowed.

9. Autopsies on COVID-19 dead bodies

**Autopsies should be avoided.** If autopsy is to be performed for special reasons, the following infection prevention control practices should be adopted:

- The Team should be well trained in infection prevention control practices.
- The number of forensic experts and support staff in the autopsy room should be limited.
- The Team should use full complement of PPE (coveralls, head cover, shoe cover, N 95 mask, goggles / face shield).
- Round ended scissors should be used
- PM40 or any other heavy duty blades with blunted points to be used to reduce prick injuries
- Only one body cavity at a time should be dissected
- Unfixed organs must be held firm on the table and sliced with a sponge – care should be taken to protect the hand
- Negative pressure to be maintained in mortuary. An oscillator saw with suction extraction of the bone aerosol into a removable chamber should be used for sawing skull, otherwise a hand saw with a chain-mail glove may be used
- Needles should not be re-sheathed after fluid sampling – needles and syringes should be placed in a sharps bucket.
- Reduce aerosol generation during autopsy using appropriate techniques especially while handling lung tissue.
• After the procedure, body should be disinfected with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite and placed in a body bag, the exterior of which will again be decontaminated with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite solution.
• The body thereafter can be handed over to the relatives.
• Autopsy table to be disinfected as per standard protocol.

10. 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.

11. At the crematorium/ Burial Ground

• 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.
• 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.
- The ash does not pose any risk and can be collected to perform the last rites.
- 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.