



**GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

No. E&A(Health)/2-65/2020
Dated, Peshawar the 04.05.2020

To

1. All Commissioners in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
2. The Director General, Health Services, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
3. All Deputy Commissioners in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
4. All District Health Officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
5. All Medical Superintendents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
6. The Chief Executive Officer, Health Care Commission, Peshawar.
7. All Hospitals Director MTIs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Subject: **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING DEAD BODIES OF SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19.**

I am directed to refer to the subject noted above and to enclose herewith "Guidelines for Managing Dead Bodies of Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19" for compliance in letter and spirit.

Encl: **As above:**

(Farhan Khan)
Section Officer (General)

Endst: No. & date even:

Copy is forwarded to :

1. PS to Secretary Health Department.
2. PA to Addl: Secretary (E), Health Department.
3. PA to Deputy Secretary (A)/Budget, Health Department.
4. All members of review committee for Guidelines of Managing Dead Bodies of Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Section Officer (General)

Burial Guidelines



Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Guidelines for managing dead bodies of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19

General Consideration:

- COVID-19 is an acute respiratory illness caused by COVID-19 virus that predominantly affects the lungs.
- Based on current evidence, the COVID-19 virus is transmitted between people through droplets, fomites and close contact, with possible spread through faeces.
- To date there is no evidence of persons having become infected from exposure to the bodies of persons who died from COVID-19.
- The safety and well-being of everyone who attends to bodies should be the first priority.

Preparation and Management of Dead bodies:

- Before attending to a body (whether at home or hospital), people should ensure that the necessary hand hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies are available including face shields and necessary infection prevention protocols are followed.
- Adults >60 years and immunosuppressed persons should not directly interact with the body.
- The dignity of the dead, their cultural and religious traditions, and their families should be respected and protected throughout.
- Prepare the body for transfer including removal of all lines, catheters and other tubes.
- Wrap body in cloth and transfer it as soon as possible to the mortuary area or the designated area where the body will be washed (no need to disinfect the body before transfer to the mortuary area)
- Avoid necessary manipulation of the body that may expel air from the lungs.
- Practice hand hygiene practices before and after contact with the body.
- Ensure that any body fluids leaking from orifices are contained by blocking the orifices appropriately with a chlorine solution soaked gauze/cotton.
- Hasty disposal of a dead from COVID-19 should be avoided.
- Body bags are not necessary, although they may be used for other reasons (e.g. excessive body fluid leakage)
- No special transport equipment or vehicle is required.
- If the family wishes only to view the body and not touch it, they may do so, using standard precautions at all times including hand hygiene. Give the family clear instructions not to touch or kiss the body;
- Authorities should manage each situation on a case-by-case basis, balancing the rights of the family, the need to investigate the cause of death, and the risks of exposure to infection.
- In case a sample report of a COVID-19 test is awaited, there is no need to hold the body as the SOPs are the same for both confirmed and suspected cases.

Personal Protective Equipment:

- Health care workers or mortuary staff or the close relatives involved in washing the body should wear appropriate PPE according to standard precautions:
 - ◆ gloves,
 - ◆ impermeable disposable gown,
 - ◆ medical mask,
 - ◆ eye protection
- and follow the religious recommendations of washing, the body should be enshrouded in the plain white cloth pieces (kafan) as required by religion.

Environmental cleaning

Human coronaviruses can remain infectious on surfaces for up to 9 days. COVID-19 virus has been detected after up to 72 hours in experimental conditions. Therefore, cleaning the environment is paramount.

- The mortuary must be kept clean and properly ventilated at all times;
- Lighting must be adequate. Surfaces and instruments should be made of materials that can be easily disinfected
- Environmental surfaces, where the body was prepared, should first be cleaned with soap and water, or a commercially prepared detergent solution;
- After cleaning, a disinfectant with a minimum concentration of 0.1% (1000 ppm) Sodium hypochlorite (bleach), or 70% ethanol should be placed on a surface for at least 1 minute.
- Items classified as clinical waste must be handled and disposed of properly.
- The above practice must be followed even if the death takes place at home.
- The belongings of the deceased person do not need to be burned or otherwise disposed of. However, they should be handled with gloves and cleaned with a detergent followed by disinfection with a solution of at least 70% ethanol or 0.1% (1000 ppm) bleach.

Burial

- Family and friends may view the body after it has been prepared for burial, in accordance with customs. They should not touch or kiss the body and should wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after the viewing.
- It is advised that all those attending the funeral prayer should wear a mask.
- Family member or friend who is unwell should not attend the funeral prayers.
- Safe distancing should be maintained throughout the procession, Funeral prayers and burial.
- Those tasked with placing the body in the grave etc., should wear gloves and wash hands with soap and water after removal of the gloves once the burial is complete.