

GUIDELINES FOR REPATRIATION OF COVID-19 POSITIVE HUMAN REMAINS

The following guidelines have been prepared with reference to the joint guidelines on transport of Covid human remains by IATA, ICAO, WHO and CDC.

Sequence of preparing the dead body at the health facility:

1. If the body is in a health facility, the body can be cleaned and prepared in a hospital ward or any other allocated area of the health facility.
2. Those handling the body must be trained in PPE donning and doffing. They should wear surgical mask, gown, double gloves (long gloves preferable), and face shielded/goggles.
3. Remove the tubes, cannula, catheter, jewelries, etc. from the dead body.
4. Any oozing wounds, cuts and abrasions, should be covered with waterproof bandages or dressings.
5. Clean with wet cotton any blood stains or secretions on the surface of the body.
6. Close the eyes of the deceased and plug the orifices with cotton.
7. Fold the arms keeping the right above the left over the upper abdomen.
8. Support the chin with a bandage tied over the chin and head.
9. Keep the legs together and put ties at the level of the knees and ankle joints.
10. Wrap the body in two cloths soaked in formalin (10% solution) or any other suitable disinfectant.
11. Put the body in an impermeable body bag.
12. The exterior of this body bag should be wiped with soap and water, then disinfected with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite (1 part of bleach to 9 parts of water)
13. Put the first body bag containing the body in to a second body bag and disinfect the exterior of the second body bag as explained above.





14. After packing the body in double body bags, the body can be sent to the mortuary.
15. Those who handled the body must doff the PPE and dispose of it safely, and wash hands with soap and water.

If the positive result was obtained after the body was transferred to the mortuary, the following measures should be taken at the mortuary.

1. The staff who handle the body must wear PPE (surgical mask, gown, double gloves (preferably long), face shield/goggles and impermeable closed shoes, preferably rubber boots). They must be trained in handling Covid-19 dead bodies and must conform to other criteria set in HPA guidelines for handling of dead bodies and funeral rites of Covid-19 positive persons, including Covid-19 vaccination.
2. Remove the body from the body bag and place on platform. Dispose of the body bag safely, as biohazard waste.
3. Wrap the body in two cloths soaked in formalin (10% solution) or any other suitable disinfectant.
4. Put the body in an impermeable body bag.
5. The exterior of this body bag should be wiped with soap and water, then disinfected with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite (1 part of bleach to 9 parts of water)
6. Put the first body bag containing the body in to a second body bag and disinfect the exterior of the second body bag as explained above.

Sealing of the body in the coffin

Whether the body was prepared in the mortuary or brought to the mortuary already prepared as above, the body with the body bags should be placed in coffin just before the time of transport.



1. The body bag is placed in a coffin. The coffin should have a wooden bottom and should be sealed from all the sides.
2. If the body has been stored in the mortuary after preparation as above, wipe the outside of the outer body bag with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite before placing in coffin.
3. Clean and disinfect the outer surface of the coffin. Wipe with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution (1 part of bleach to 9 parts of water).
4. Coffin should NEVER be re-opened during transport, after sealing.
5. Customs Officers and Police Officers present in the mortuary at the sealing of coffin should remain away from the platform where body is being prepared for transport. They should not touch the body, the platform or the body bags/coffin during the process. They do not need to wear PPE.
6. After the coffin is removed for transport, the platform where body was handled should be cleaned with detergent, and then disinfected using 0.5% bleach solution. Do not use high pressure water jets when cleaning.
7. If body fluids were spilled, mop up the spill with absorbent material such as paper towels, saturate the area with 1% sodium hypochlorite for 1 minute, then remove all waste using tongs into biohazard bag. Wash the area with detergent and water, rinse and then disinfect with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution.
8. Gloves can be used by those handling the coffin. Dispose of the gloves safely and wash hands with soap and water afterwards.
9. Disinfect all areas where coffin was placed during transport to aircraft using 1:49 bleach solution. When disinfecting, use detergent to first clean the area, rinse with water and then disinfect.



Additional Points

1. Embalming of body of those who were positive for covid-19 is not recommended by WHO. If the destination country or airline requires the body to be embalmed, the mortuary must adhere to strict infection prevention and control measures during embalming.
2. All the paperwork and procedures for export of human remains must be complete, including those of Police and Customs and International Border Health (IBH) Unit of Health Protection Agency.
3. The mortuary must certify that all the procedures in this document have been adhered to.
4. When this certification from mortuary is produced, IBH will give final clearance for transport.

