

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Security Management of the Deceased Patient



Audience: Security Leadership

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COVID_19 Response Team Owner: Logistics – Security

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What's Changed: No changes made during the 10/20/2020 review.

COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Transportation of the Deceased

The following is guidance for safely transporting deceased patients who are suspected or confirmed to be positive for COVID-19. This interim guidance is based on what is currently known [about COVID-19](#) and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) current guidance:

Most often, the spread of virus from a living person happens with close contact (i.e., within about 6 feet) via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to the way that influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. This route of transmission is not a concern when handling human remains that have been prepared for transport. Ensure that appropriate work practices are used to prevent direct contact with the infectious material contained within the body bag, avoid percutaneous injury, and the hazards related to moving heavy remains.

- Security staff may be called to transport deceased patients who are suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients from a room to the morgue.
- Security staff should be familiar with the morgue and morgue surge policies
- Precautions: Standard Precautions (Nitrile Gloves). A mask is not required unless the body bag is reopened.
- Check with clinical staff to determine if extubation has recently been conducted; only if the body needed to be transported immediately thereafter would a gown, gloves and N-95 mask be required while in the patient room due to retained droplets in the air. Gown and mask may be discarded on exit from the room.
- Check with appropriate clinical staff to ensure that the shroud (body bag) has been disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant.
- Follow routine post-mortem procedures when bagging and transporting the body.
- Special care should always be taken to avoid tearing the body bag when transferring the deceased from bed to stretcher and stretcher to morgue unit. **STANDARD BODY BAGS ARE NOT DESIGNED TO BE USED FOR LIFTING.** The use of a movement aid, such as a draw sheet, Reeves stretcher, backboard, etc., should be considered to facilitate transfers.

- *To maintain stewardship over limited resources, double body bagging should be avoided whenever possible.*
- Ensure that the Funeral Director is aware of the COVID-19 possibility so that they can take proper precautions when receiving the body.

References:

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