

COVID-19 epidemic

Handling of the body of a patient with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19

Version 5 - 26 March 2020

PROTECTION OF CARE WORKERS AND DEATH ROOM STAFF

- Surgical mask
- Headwear: (hat, cap, etc.)
- Protective eye guards
- Disposable waterproof long-sleeved gown or disposable long-sleeved gown + a plastic apron
- Disposable gloves

When carrying out a high-risk manoeuvre (e.g. extubation):

- FFP2 mask: adjusted to fit the face (fit-check)

HANDLING OF THE BODY

NB: Prosthetic devices which function using a battery (*pacemakers*) must be removed in the patient's room or in the death room, in line with the institution's procedures, and be decontaminated then disposed of using the waste disposal channel in place within the institution.

- Carry out a brief wash of the body only in the room in which it is being handled.
 - Use a disposable washcloth without water (pre-impregnated) or a disposable washcloth soaked in soap and water that has been well wrung-out, without using a washing bowl. Wear disposable protection. Dispose of the gloves in the DASRI channel.
 - Identify the body using an identity bracelet (in accordance with the procedure in force in the institution).
 - In the room: cover the trolley with a disposable sheet (or failing that, a fabric sheet).
 - Place the body on the sheet (fold over the edges of the sheet to cover the body).
 - Wrap the body in an airtight, closed body bag (closure at the head end).
 - Disinfect the body bag with a wipe soaked in detergent-disinfectant that complies with virucidal standards (such as Surfa'safe Premium or Septalkan wipes).
 - Place the body wrapped in the body bag inside a 2nd hermetically-sealed body bag (with the closure at the head end to enable the family to see the patient) NB: the 2nd bag ensures airtightness before being placed in a coffin. Depending on the quality of the body bags, this may not be necessary.
 - Continue with disinfecting the 2nd body bag in the same way.
 - Identify the body bag with one of the patient's labels (in accordance with the institution's procedure)
 - The body, in its body bag covered with a sheet, is transferred to the death room.
- Close family can view the face of the deceased in the hospital room, following the appropriate hygiene precautions. It must be explained to the close family that they may not kiss the body or have any direct contact with it. The close family must disinfect their hands by rubbing them with hydro-alcohol based solution when they leave the room.
 - This viewing in the department can only take place with family members (very close family, partners, children and parents) who may have been present in the unit in a maximum of two hours after the death. Beyond this time, viewing may take place in the death room.
 - The personal effects of the deceased are to be placed in a closed plastic bag for 10 days, unless they can be washed at over 60°C for at least 30 minutes, or can be disinfected.

IN THE DEATH ROOM

- If it is possible under the circumstances, this being decided by the employee in charge of the death room, the body may be viewed by the close family who request to do so. In this case, the body, still in its bag, is covered by a sheet up to the chest and is shown to the family members from a distance of one metre away. No contact with the body is permitted.
- No embalming must be carried out.
- The body will be placed in a simple coffin in line with the features specified in Article R. 2213-25 of the General Local Government Code.

The standard precautions must be followed in all the stages of the handling of the body, in particular:

- Wear gloves and an apron when in any contact with biological liquids, waste materials or dirty linen.
- Disinfect your hands by rubbing them together with a hydro-alcohol based solution before putting on protective clothing and gloves, and when the gloves are removed at the end of any treatment.
- Do not touch or handle the face mask once it is in place
- Do not touch your face while handling the deceased patient's body.

APPENDIX

LETTER TO FAMILIES: Important information for families who have just lost a loved one -Restrictive measures linked to the Covid-19 measures

KEY TEXTS

Advice relating to the handling of the body of a patient with probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 HCSP 24 March 2020.

Hermetically-sealed body bags are to be ordered "off market"

Date and subject of the amendment:

13 March 2020- Amendment to recommendations

18 March 2020- Specifics on the prohibition to transport the body without a coffin

20 March 2020- Specifics on those persons authorised to be present to view the body. Appendix: letter to the families

26 March 2020 – Amendment to the recommendations for the family viewing the body

REDACTION	VALIDATION	APPROVAL
SOUYRI Valérie Dr. Sandra FOURNIER Infection Control Department Head office of the Greater Paris Public Hospital Authority (AP-HP) Yannick TOLILA-HUET Health Service Manager, Chair of the Collegial Team of Professionals of Death Rooms of the AP-HP <i>Signature on the original paper</i> Date of creation: 26 March 2020	Dr. Sandra FOURNIER Risk Prevention Department Infectious-Headquarters APHP <i>Signature on the original paper</i> Date of validation: 26 March 2020	Christine GUERI Director of the Patient Partnership Quality Department, Headquarters AP-HP <i>Signature on the original paper</i> Date of approval: 26 March 2020
Recipients:	<i>Operational Hygiene Teams, Chairs of the Nosocomial Infection Committee (CLIN), Quality Directors</i>	