

## **Guidance for Handling Human Remains – Muslim Community**

March 27, 2020 – Handling human remains poses inherent risk. While the amount of time a person who has died from COVID 19 remains infectious is uncertain; everyone handling remains should assume that contact with every deceased person could pose a risk to health and safety of the individual(s) handling the deceased. **The BAO strongly recommends that only licensed individuals or others working on behalf of a licensed funeral establishment operator or transfer service operator participates in the handling of human remains; especially those human remains who have died from complications due to having been infected by COVID-19.**

Individuals assisting the family in handling the deceased, whether during the transportation of the deceased to and from the mosque; or during the bathing (Ghusul) and storage of the deceased must always use Routine Practices and always avoid touching your face.

### **What are Routine Practices?**

Routine Practices are based on the premise that ALL deceased remains are potentially infectious and that the same safe standards of practice should be used routinely when handling all deceased remains to prevent exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or soiled items and to prevent the spread of disease.

### **Hand Hygiene**

Hand hygiene (washing hands) is the process of removing visible soil and removing or killing microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using soap and running water or an alcohol-based hand rub when access to soap and running water is unavailable.

Wash your hands often and especially before moving to another activity. Perform hand hygiene after engaging in any task where a risk of exposure exists.

Additionally, the consistent and correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hand hygiene is considered the most important and effective Infection Prevention and Control measure to prevent the spread of infections.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

#### **Gloves**

Gloves must be worn when it is anticipated that the hands will be in contact with mucous membranes, non-intact skin, tissue, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, or contaminated equipment and environmental surfaces.

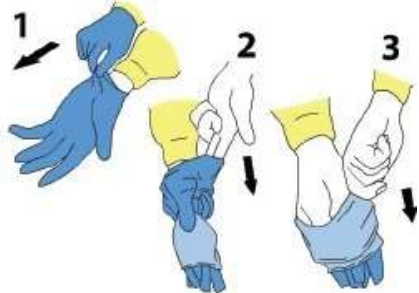
The use of gloves provides volunteers with additional protection beyond intact skin and employing hand hygiene.

### **Appropriate Glove Use:**

- Always wear the correct size gloves.
- Apply gloves immediately before the activity for which they are required.
- Clean hands thoroughly before putting on gloves.
- Remove and discard gloves immediately after the activity for which they were used.
- Perform hand hygiene immediately after glove removal
- Change or remove gloves after touching a contaminated site of deceased remains and before touching a clean site or the environment.
- Do not wash or reuse disposable gloves.

### **Glove Removal**

1. Grasp the outside edge of the glove, near the wrist and peel away from the hand, turning the glove inside out.
2. Hold the glove in the opposite gloved hand.
3. Slide an ungloved finger or thumb under the wrist of the remaining glove.
4. Peel the glove off and over the first glove, making a bag for both gloves.
5. Discard gloves in appropriate receptacle.



### **Gown**

Gowns used as Personal Protective Equipment need to be cuffed, long-sleeved, and offer full coverage of the body front, from neck to mid-thigh or below. A gown is worn when it is anticipated that a procedure is likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions. Gowns may be disposable or reusable. Reusable gowns must be laundered after each use.

### **Putting on Gown**

1. Perform hand hygiene
2. Put gown on with the opening to the back
3. Fasten both the neck and waist ties

### Gown Removal

1. Unfasten ties and peel gown away from neck.
2. Slip fingers of one hand under the wrist cuff and pull hand inside.
3. Using inside hand, push sleeve off with the other arm.
4. Fold dirty-to-dirty and roll into bundle (do not shake).
5. Discard disposable gowns or place reusable gowns in hamper for laundering.
6. Perform hand hygiene.



### Face Protection

Face protection is used as a barrier to protect the eye, nose or mouth from coming into contact with splashes and sprays. The types and combinations of protective equipment vary and must be selected based on a risk assessment prior to performing any procedure.

### Masks

A mask is used in the bereavement care setting to protect the mucous membranes of the nose and mouth when it is anticipated that a procedure is likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions.

#### Appropriate Mask Use:

- Select a mask appropriate to the activity.
- Securely cover the nose and mouth with the mask.
- Change mask if it becomes wet.
- Refrain from touching the mask while wearing it.
- Remove mask correctly immediately after completion of task.
- Discard the mask into an appropriate waste receptacle.
- Do not allow the mask to hang or dangle around the neck.
- Perform hand hygiene after removing the mask.
- Do not reuse disposable masks.
- Do not fold the mask or put it in a pocket for later use.

### Mask Removal

The straps, ear loops and ties of the mask may be touched without using gloves. However, the front of the mask must always be considered as contaminated.

**Mask Removal (ties)** and **Mask Removal (straps)** depicts the steps for proper mask removal.

1. Untie the bottom tie then top, or grasp straps or ear loops.
2. Pull forward off the head, bending forward to allow the mask to fall away from the face.
3. Discard the mask immediately into appropriate receptacle.

Ties:



Straps:



### Eye Protection

Eye protection is used by bereavement care personnel, in addition to a mask, to protect the mucous membranes of the eyes when it is anticipated that a procedure is likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions. Eye protection may be disposable or, if reusable, must be cleaned prior to re-use. It is important that eye protection fits comfortably while not interfering with visual activity.

Prescription eyeglasses are not acceptable by themselves as eye protection although they may be worn underneath face shields and some types of protective eyewear.

### Appropriate eye protection includes:

- Safety Glasses
- Safety Goggles
- Face Shields
- Visors attached to masks

### Eye Protection Removal

The arms of the goggles and the headband of the face shields may be touched without using gloves. However, the front of the goggles/face shield must always be considered to be contaminated.

### Eye Protection Removal

- Remove eye protection by handling ear loops, sides or back only.
- Discard into waste receptacle or container to be sent for reprocessing.
- Personally owned eyewear must be cleaned by the individual after use.



### Head Covers

Head covers are used in the bereavement care setting to protect the head and hair from contamination by body fluids and should be worn whenever the potential for splashes exist.

### Shoe Covers

Shoe covers are used to prevent the spread of microorganisms from affected areas to other areas inside or outside of the bereavement care setting, or to the residence of individuals. To ensure effectiveness, shoe covers should be worn whenever the potential exists for an individual's shoes to come into contact with body fluids.

The attached charts for donning (putting on) and doffing (removing) PPE should be posted throughout the rooms in which the deceased is stored/bathed.

### Transporting the Deceased

**The BAO strongly recommends using the services of a licensed Funeral Establishment Operator or Transfer Service Operator to perform any transportation of the deceased.**

During the transportation of the deceased, the use of PPE and hand hygiene before and after the transportation must be strictly enforced.

The deceased will likely have been placed into a body pouch (body bag) if death occurred in hospital or long-term care facility; however individuals facilitating the transportation of the deceased should be prepared with a body pouch (body bag) in which to place the deceased person before moving the individual onto the stretcher (trolley). This is especially important if the death took place in the home.

Disinfection of the stretcher (trolley) and transport vehicle must be performed before and after each use.

If the deceased has been autopsied, avoid contact with the body.

### Washing the Body (Ghusul)

Keep the number of people involved in the Ghusul to the minimum number of people which can still safely perform the ritual.

The use of PPE is mandatory to avoid direct contact with blood or body fluids.

Perform hand hygiene before and after Ghusul.

Where possible, if the deceased is known to be contagious and Ghusul is impossible, Tayammum (purification using sand or dust) can be done over the body bag of the deceased.

### **Shrouding (Kafan) and Casketing the Body**

The exterior of the body pouch should be disinfected after the deceased having been placed inside.

The casket should be disinfected once the deceased (inside the body pouch) has been placed inside.

### **Paying Last Respects**

The situation related to public gatherings continues to evolve. A State of Emergency was declared on March 17, 2020 by Premier Ford. **Funeral homes have been limited to a maximum of 10 people per funeral home, not counting funeral home staff.**

Groups of people wishing to pay respects to the deceased **MUST** be limited to **10 people or fewer**, and everyone must maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from each other. While no cases (to date) have been reported of people being infected while in close proximity to a deceased person, physical contact with the deceased should be avoided and any essential contact requires the use of PPE.

No food or drinks should be present or consumed during these events.

No physical contact should be made between individuals during the paying of respects. i.e. no shaking hands or hugging should be permitted.

Family members or others who have been asked to self-isolate or quarantine must not attend.

### **Funeral Prayer (Janazah)**

It is likely that the mosque is closed during the pandemic. The Janazah prayer can take place outside of the mosque or at the cemetery and with limited attendance.

A minimum of two metres must be maintained at all times between people in attendance at the cemetery.

### **Burial**

All handling of the casket should be kept to the minimum number of people to be able to handle it safely.

Each person who comes into contact with the casket must use PPE and perform hand hygiene after contact.

## **OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING FOR A NON-COVID- 19 DEATH**

### **WAKE OR VISITATION**

- Adhere to all government crowd gatherings regulations. Limit the numbers or avoid the wake or visitation, if possible.
- Remember the TWO METER DISTANCE and avoid close interactions (no hugging or shaking hands or kissing). When greeting people it's best to avoid elbow bumps or fist bumps because they put you within one meter of the other person. The best way when you meet is to put your hand over your heart when greeting others.
- Anyone with symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing must stay away.
- The elderly and anyone with existing health conditions must stay away.
- **All visitors to Canada must follow self-isolation protocol.**

### **PAYING LAST RESPECTS**

- Limited viewing may be allowed but only for limited family members with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment(PPE).

### **JANAZAH**

- Janazah prayer is not compulsory on everyone, it's fard kifaya (one person or a few in observance will remove the obligation of the entire community).
- The prayer can take place as normal – although it may be advisable to have the janazah at the cemetery. Remember the TWO METER DISTANCE.

### **BURIAL**

- Keep the number of people handling the coffin to a minimum.
- While most family and friends will be encouraged to attend the burial because it's outdoors, please remember the TWO METER DISTANCE.

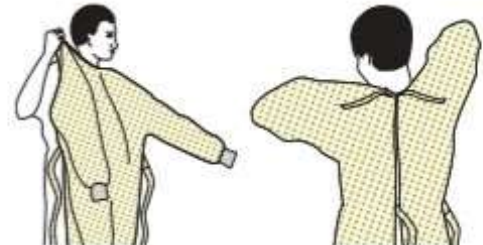


## SEQUENCE FOR PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The type of PPE used will vary based on the level of precautions required, such as standard and contact, droplet or airborne infection isolation precautions. The procedure for putting on and removing PPE should be tailored to the specific type of PPE.

### 1. GOWN

- Fully cover torso from neck to knees, arms to end of wrists, and wrap around the back
- Fasten in back of neck and waist



### 2. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck
- Fit flexible band to nose bridge
- Fit snug to face and below chin
- Fit-check respirator



### 3. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Place over face and eyes and adjust to fit



### 4. GLOVES

- Extend to cover wrist of isolation gown



## USE SAFE WORK PRACTICES TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND LIMIT THE SPREAD OF CONTAMINATION

- Keep hands away from face
- Limit surfaces touched
- Change gloves when torn or heavily contaminated
- Perform hand hygiene





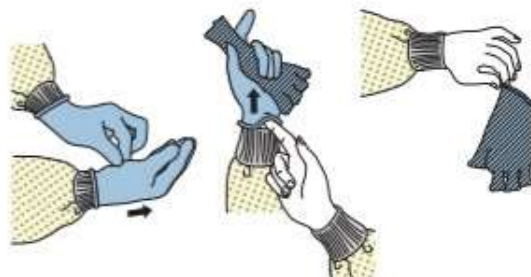
## HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

### EXAMPLE 1

There are a variety of ways to safely remove PPE without contaminating your clothing, skin, or mucous membranes with potentially infectious materials. Here is one example. **Remove all PPE before exiting the patient room** except a respirator, if worn. Remove the respirator **after** leaving the patient room and closing the door. Remove PPE in the following sequence:

#### 1. GLOVES

- Outside of gloves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Using a gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off first glove
- Hold removed glove in gloved hand
- Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist and peel off second glove over first glove
- Discard gloves in a waste container



#### 2. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Outside of goggles or face shield are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during goggle or face shield removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Remove goggles or face shield from the back by lifting head band or ear pieces
- If the item is reusable, place in designated receptacle for reprocessing. Otherwise, discard in a waste container



#### 3. GOWN

- Gown front and sleeves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during gown removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Unfasten gown ties, taking care that sleeves don't contact your body when reaching for ties
- Pull gown away from neck and shoulders, touching inside of gown only
- Turn gown inside out
- Fold or roll into a bundle and discard in a waste container

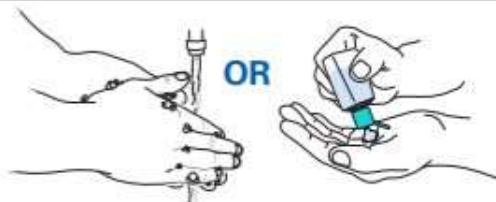


#### 4. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Front of mask/respirator is contaminated — **DO NOT TOUCH!**
- If your hands get contaminated during mask/respirator removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp bottom ties or elastics of the mask/respirator, then the ones at the top, and remove without touching the front
- Discard in a waste container



#### 5. WASH HANDS OR USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE



**PERFORM HAND HYGIENE BETWEEN STEPS IF HANDS BECOME CONTAMINATED AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE**

