

**Inpt – Addendum H – Postmortem Cares**  
**Guidance for the Postmortem cares of patients**  
**with or under investigation for COVID-19**  
(Updated 05/06/2020)



This document is to provide guidance to healthcare workers performing postmortem cares to patients with or under investigation for COVID-19. The practices outlined in this document are in addition to standard postmortem protocols. For additional information, refer to Nebraska Medicine Policy TX02 “Acute Bereavement Care.”

Postmortem cares can begin immediately after family has had an opportunity to view the body. A delay in performing postmortem cares for air exchanges is not required.

- Gather Supplies needed for post mortem cares
  - Shroud
  - Germicidal wipes
  - Bathing supplies
  - Surgical mask for patient
  
- Don PPE required to prepare the body for the morgue.
  - If > 60 minutes of time have elapsed since patient death, droplet/contact precaution PPE is required.
  - If <60 minutes of time have elapsed since patient death, perform postmortem cares in full COVID-19 PPE.

**Postmortem Cares on Non-Autopsy Patients:**

- Nursing staff will clamp all drains and pull all lines, tubes and drains.
- Respiratory Therapy will extubate a patient if they were intubated at time of death.
- After cleansing the body place surgical mask on patient and follow protocol for preparing the body for the morgue.
- Place patient in shroud and zip shroud.
- Wipe down outer shroud with disinfectant wipes.
- After shroud is dry place all required patient labels in the appropriate places on the shroud and patient body.
- Contact Security for transport of the body to the morgue. 402.559.5111
- Security is to transport patient to the morgue and follow standard operating procedures for morgue transportation and delivery.
- Security will don required PPE for transport of a COVID positive corpse.
  - If <60 minutes have elapsed since patient death, Airborne/Contact PPE is required. If personnel are not fit tested they may not enter the patient room.
  - If >60 minutes have elapsed since patient death, Droplet/Contact precautions are required.

- The high touch surfaces of the morgue cart will be wiped down at point of use prior to transport to the morgue.
- Respiratory protection (Face Mask or Extended Use N95) and CLEAN gloves are the only PPE permitted once the transport is initiated.

#### **Postmortem Care for Autopsy patients:**

- Autopsies will not be performed on those with or under investigation for COVID-19 unless requested by the State Health Department.

#### **Imminent Death & Postmortem Testing**

- Providers with a suspicion for COVID-19 may obtain NP swab from patient with suspected but unconfirmed Covid-19 if death is imminent.
- Postmortem testing will not occur unless requested by the State Health Department.