

Government of West Bengal

Health and Family Welfare Department

Memo no. 244/HFW/2020

Dated 23/09/2020

Modified SOP for the Disposal of Dead Body of COVID Positive Person


In continuation of this office earlier advisories regarding the disposal of the dead body of persons infected with Covid-19 issued vide Memo No. H&FW-179/A/20 dated 6th June, 2020 read with the 'Covid-19 Guidelines on Dead Body Management' issued on 15th March, 2020 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India, it is hereby ordered that of all the dedicated Covid Hospitals (both Govt and private) shall henceforth ensure the following protocol while dealing with the dead body of a Covid-19 infected person:

1. The dead body shall be handed over to the immediate next of kin of the deceased at the hospital. Such kins, not exceeding six persons and including the parents/surviving spouse/children, shall take the body straight to the burial ground/crematorium identified by the local authorities and not to anywhere else including the home of the deceased where he/she last resided after completion of the hospital formalities.
2. The vehicle carrying the dead body to designated crematorium/burial place shall be either vehicle of the local authorities or of agencies approved by local authorities for the purpose. The local authority shall publish such lists on their website. The relatives of the deceased, not more than the six in number, can accompany the dead-body in a separate vehicle(s).
3. The body before being handed over should be secured in a body bag, the face end of which should be transparent and the exterior of which will be appropriately sanitized/decontaminated so as to eliminate/minimize the risk to the people transporting the dead body.
4. The kin of the deceased receiving the body shall also be handed over the detailed funeral guideline, as issued by this Department, regarding the different formalities and precautions to be followed from the receipt to the disposal of the body.
5. The people handling the dead body shall follow standard precautions, e.g. surgical mask, gloves, etc. If available and possible, PPE should be used.



6. The vehicle carrying the dead body to the crematorium/burial ground will be suitably decontaminated and sanitized.
7. The staff of the crematorium/burial ground should be duly sensitized that Covid-19 does not pose additional risk. However, they must practice standard precautions.
8. The face end of the body bag may be unzipped by the staff at the crematorium/burial ground to allow the relatives to see the body for one last time. At this time, religious rituals, such as reading from religious scripts, sprinkling holy water, offering grains and such other last rite rituals, as do not warrant touching the body of the deceased, should be allowed. This should be done expeditiously to avoid queing or accumulation of crowd at the crematorium.
9. After the cremation/burial, the family members and the staff of the crematorium/burial ground should appropriately sanitize themselves.
10. As a social distancing measure, large gathering at the crematorium/burial ground should be scrupulously avoided.
11. In case, the body of a Covid-19 infected deceased remains unclaimed for 24 hours, the same shall be cremated/buried as the case may be with due dignity at state expense. Hospital and local authorities shall co-ordinate in this regard.

All concerned should ensure that above guidelines are implemented with immediate effect.


Secretary, H&FW 23/09/2020