



Recommendations of the Ohio Funeral Directors Association to Facilitate the Transfer of Deceased Patients from Nursing Homes, Long Term Care, and Hospice Facilities

First and foremost, thank you for all that you are doing to provide care and comfort, while protecting all involved. Our members, likewise, are doing everything possible to respectfully and compassionately care for the decedents during this distressing time.

To expedite the response by funeral directors and limit the spread of the virus, implementing the following steps (1) when transferring a decedent into a funeral home's care would be extremely beneficial:

1. If respiratory infection is the cause of death, please advise the funeral practitioner at the time of initial death notification. HIPAA Regulations allow for the release of information to the public, law enforcement, funeral directors and other governmental agencies. (2)
2. In order to minimize exposures for patients, facility staff and funeral home staff, identifying a holding room for deceased patients close to an exit from which funeral home will remove the decedent, is crucial. If stretchers are not available to move the decedent, please refer to your facility's disaster plan on transferring "in bed" patients.
3. With the exception of a death deemed to be a Coroner's case, prepare the body for transfer including removal of all lines, catheters and other tubes.
4. If respiratory infection is the cause of death or suspected, if available place rolled cotton gauze or cotton balls in each nostril and oral cavity, please make sure that the decedent's head is covered with a pillow case or plastic bag to minimize aerosolized droplets before being placed in a body bag (if available) or optionally, completely wrapped in a sheet and moved to the designated holding area near an exit for release to the funeral home.
5. Make sure any jewelry or other personal belongings are removed from the deceased and placed in a separate bag to be kept with the decedent.
6. Place ID tag (if available) on the outside of the bag. Preferably tying the two zippers on the body bag together or taped to the outside of the outer most sheet wrapping the remains.
7. Funeral homes, like all health care providers and first responders are experiencing a shortage of PPE equipment. Therefore, only appropriate PPE for the circumstances will be used.
8. Please have any necessary documentation available at the transfer area to help the funeral practitioner avoid going into more than one area of your facility.
9. Please limit the amount of personnel escorting the funeral staff and decedent from the point of removal to the funeral vehicle.

On behalf of the members of OFDA, we thank the many courageous nurses, aides and facility staff for your tireless efforts in combating COVID-19 on the front lines of this health crisis.

(1) Steps should be implemented for all cases of infectious respiratory diseases: influenza A/B, tuberculosis, COVID-19, etc. and should be included in the facility's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as best practice guidelines.

(2) Reference US 45 CFR 164.512 (g)(2)