



# DEDER GENERAL HOSPITAL

## Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Dead Body Handling

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## 1. Purpose

To outline the procedures for safe, respectful, and infection-preventive handling of deceased patients, minimizing the risk of disease transmission to healthcare workers, patients, and visitors.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all healthcare workers involved in the care, transport, storage, and release of deceased individuals in the hospital.

## 3. Responsibilities

- ✍ **Clinical Staff:** Confirm death, notify authorities, and prepare the body according to IPC protocol.
- ✍ **Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) Officer:** Ensure compliance with body handling protocols.
- ✍ **Mortuary Staff:** Safely transport and store bodies.
- ✍ **Environmental Cleaning Staff:** Clean and disinfect areas used during handling.

## 4. Required PPE

**All staff must wear appropriate PPE:**

- ✎ Disposable gloves
- ✎ Impermeable gown or apron
- ✎ Surgical mask (N95 for TB or COVID-19 cases)
- ✎ Eye protection (goggles or face shield)
- ✎ Shoe covers (if risk of body fluid exposure)

## 5. Procedure

### 5.1 Before Handling

- ✎ Confirm death and document appropriately.
- ✎ Inform IPC officer if the deceased had a communicable disease.
- ✎ Gather all necessary PPE and body handling supplies (body bag, labels, absorbent materials, etc.).

### 5.2 Body Preparation

- ✎ Perform hand hygiene and don PPE.
- ✎ Plug natural orifices (nose, mouth, rectum) with absorbent material if fluid leakage is likely.
- ✎ Wrap the body in a clean sheet or shroud before placing in a body bag.
- ✎ For infectious cases, double body bagging is recommended.

✍ Clearly label the bag with:

- ✍ Name and ID of deceased
- ✍ Time and date of death
- ✍ Infection risk (e.g., "Infectious - COVID-19")

### 5.3 Transportation

- ✍ Use a designated trolley covered with plastic or washable surface.
- ✍ Transport the body directly to the mortuary using designated routes.
- ✍ Avoid movement through public areas whenever possible.

### 5.4 Mortuary Handling

- ✍ Store the body in a refrigeration unit if available.
- ✍ Ensure mortuary staff are aware of infection risks and use PPE accordingly.
- ✍ Maintain dignity and privacy of the deceased at all times.

## 6. Environmental Cleaning

- ✍ Clean and disinfect all surfaces, stretchers, and body trolleys using 0.5% chlorine solution or hospital-approved disinfectant.
- ✍ Perform terminal cleaning of the patient's room following removal of the body.

## 7. Waste Disposal

- ✍ Dispose of used PPE and contaminated materials as infectious waste.
- ✍ Follow biomedical waste management protocols per national guidelines.

## 8. Family Viewing & Release

- ✍ Allow family viewing only under supervision and after body preparation is complete.
- ✍ Inform relatives of any infection risk and advise against touching the body if infectious.
- ✍ Upon release, ensure all documentation and release forms are complete.

## 9. Training and Compliance

- ✍ All staff must receive training on dead body handling procedures, including PPE usage and IPC risks.
- ✍ IPC Officer shall conduct periodic audits and drills.

## 10. References

1. Ethiopian National IPC Reference Manual, Vol. 1
2. WHO Guidelines on Safe Management of a Dead Body in the Context of COVID-19
3. CDC Interim Guidance for Handling the Body of a Deceased Person with COVID-19