



DEDER GENERAL HOSPITAL

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Dead Body Handling

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Prepared By: Ibrahim Tahir (BSc)-IPC focal Person

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Deder, Oromia

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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