

GHUSL, JANAZAH & BURIAL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Guidance Document

Bismillah hirRahman nirRaheem

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

Abundant Peace, Blessings and Salutations upon the Prophet Muhammad (S)

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Introduction

In this time of difficulty, anxiety, and fear over the COVID-19 pandemic, we are issuing a procedural guide to our Muslim workers who will be dealing with the deceased. Every precaution should be taken to ensure your safety and well-being. These procedures were determined keeping the rules of Islamic jurisprudence at the forefront, while considering the harm of the spread of the virus. It is our aim to honour our deceased as per Islamic guidelines while ensuring the safety and good health of the funeral workers and the general community. We highly advise that the following protocols be adhered to for ghusl, janazah, and burial arrangements. All Masaajid are advised to take inventory of their personal protective equipment.

Volunteer Criteria

Those individuals who are involved in ghusl and janazah must abide by the following:

1. Has been free of any of the following symptoms within the past 14 days:
 - a. Fever, cough, cold, flu, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, muscle and joint aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, difficulty breathing, sneezing, or any other upper respiratory symptoms,
2. Does not belong to any of the following groups:
 - a. Child or persons with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, liver disease, kidney disease, cancer, hepatitis, transplant recipient, HIV or any other condition that compromises the immune system
3. Is preferably between the ages of 18 and 49.
4. Does not use medications that may suppress his/her immune system.
5. Has not traveled outside of Canada in the past 30 days
6. Has not had any close contact of any kind for 14 days (less than 2 metres, same household, or same workplace) with a person with confirmed or possible COVID-19;
7. Has not had any close contact (less than 2 metres, same household, or same workplace) with anyone with the aforementioned symptoms (in point 1) or with anyone who has traveled outside of Canada within the last 14 days.
8. Is not a healthcare worker, does not work in a nursing or retirement home, does not work in a healthcare facility, and is not employed in an essential service (such as transit employee or firefighter) that is in direct contact with the public.
9. Does not live with anyone who has a weakened immune system, or who is currently on chemotherapy or taking medications that may weaken their immune system
10. For other volunteers, they may be apparently healthy and not showing any symptoms but may be carrying the virus, therefore, they must take all possible precautions to ensure that they don't transmit it to others (if God forbid they are carrying the virus).



11. The following procedures are to be adhered to and the volunteer must be fully informed that these procedures are non-exhaustive and subject to change with little or no notice.

Procedures To Ensure Safety and Well-Being

- ❖ Purify your intentions before performing the ghusl and janazah
- ❖ Agree to have temperature checked in advance of, or during, volunteer activity
- ❖ You agree, at a minimum, to stay informed of and adherent to the latest local and regional public health guidelines and recommendations
- ❖ Please be discrete and confidential with the information of the deceased and their family
- ❖ Wear a new set of freshly laundered clothes each day of volunteering
- ❖ Wash hands and arms up to the elbows with soap and water for at least 20 seconds prior to arriving and at the end of each shift before leaving
- ❖ Wear a new set of personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times for each shift and do not reuse them once removed. (Please see below regarding steps for wearing and removing PPE)
- ❖ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth or face at all times while volunteering. If you must do so, repeat the above handwashing procedure.
- ❖ Abide by Social Distancing recommendations:
 - Please maintain 6 feet (2 metre) distance between all persons at all times
 - Do not shake hands, hug, kiss or engage in any physical contact with other persons
 - Arrive at the assigned time and leave immediately afterwards
 - Spend the least amount of time needed, with the least number of people needed, in the largest room possible in order to reduce transmission of the virus.
 - To disinfect any and all surfaces with disinfectants, >60% alcohol or diluted bleach, before, between and after shifts.
- ❖ If, at any point, the volunteer or anyone in his/her household or workplace or any other close contact develops any symptoms that may be consistent with COVID-19 infection as above, he/she will not present for ghusl/janazah and will notify the direct supervisor and contact local Public Health authority for further guidance. The volunteer understands the s/he shall be removed from the list of active volunteers for at least 14 days after the onset of symptoms and until 48 hours after resolution of all symptoms. If symptoms begin during a shift, immediately remove yourself from the team, and notify your direct supervisor, put on a new mask and proceed home using private transportation, and remain in isolation. At this point, the volunteer shall agree to contact local Public Health authority for further guidance.



Personal Protective Equipment Requirements

This includes gloves, water resistant gown / plastic apron over water-repellent gown, and N95 masks. Use goggles and/or face shield to protect face and eyes.

Please see YouTube video links below and PPE diagram (Appendix 1).

1. Observe strict personal hygiene and put on appropriate PPE IN THE APPROPRIATE ORDER
<https://youtu.be/s2z1uM1fXN8>
2. Avoid touching the body without PPE.
3. Remove PPE IN THE APPROPRIATE ORDER (https://youtu.be/crGIUX3_4DA) after the body is placed into the wooden casket. Wash hands and arms with soap and water for 20 seconds, making sure to clean your nails and the spaces between fingers. Thoroughly dry.
4. Take a shower with soap and water at the ghusl facility if available, or immediately upon returning home prior to interacting with family members. (One should go straight home and not anywhere else prior to showering.)
5. Clothing should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and fresh clothes should be worn after showering.
6. All members involved in body transportation, ghusl, shrouding, and cleaning should place their clothing in the laundry for immediate washing in hot water and detergent on their arrival at home.
7. Please note, that if the Cause of Death is COVID-19 or if the cause of death is not due to COVID-19, but the deceased passed away in a hospital, nursing home or in a retirement home or at home and was possibly in contact with someone who had COVID-19, then the virus is still active and alive in the body even though the individual is deceased.
8. If the body condition is very bad or severely infected, then tayammum may be appropriate, again with PPE.
9. If PPE is not available, then wear gloves and surgical masks and pour water from 6 feet (2 metres) away without touching the body and if this is not possible, then make the intention of doing ghusl and leave the body as is, if the body condition is very bad or severely infected.

Workers Picking up the Deceased

(The deceased may be in a hospital, LTC facility, or other venue, where arrangements may be available for ghusl and shrouding, please check with your local facilities)

1. Ensure all members of the team are wearing appropriate protective clothing (PPE), as described above, prior to entering the room of the deceased.
2. Transport the deceased in a sealed waterproof body bag as needed.
3. Avoid direct contact with blood or any bodily fluids from the deceased.



4. Wipe down and thoroughly wash all surfaces the body/body bag has been in contact with: stretcher, interior of transportation vehicles, room, wash trolley, tables, exterior of the coffin/casket, trolley, and any other surfaces used.
5. Sanitize the vehicle after the deceased has been transferred to the mosque morgue.
6. Use disinfectants, sanitizers with >60% alcohol or diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4 parts of water) and allow to air dry.
7. Limit the number of locations to which the body is transported.

Bathing/Taghseel/Ghusl

1. Make sure the body is wrapped in a sealed waterproof bag and if the cause of death is known to be related to the COVID-19 virus.
2. If the cause of death is not due to COVID-19, but the deceased passed away in a hospital, nursing home or in a retirement home or at home and was possibly in contact with someone who had COVID-19, then consultation is recommended with an Infectious Diseases specialist or other person trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Protocol. If this cannot be sought in a timely fashion, then default to presumed COVID-19 protocol.
3. Assemble a team with the most trained volunteers with 2-4 members only and ensure all are dressed in PPE as per protocol. Each individual should maintain 6 feet distance from one another. It is advised for the team to discuss the steps prior to starting in order to minimize exposure, and review and be proficient with the PPE protocol in the instructional videos and appendix 1 in advance.
4. Remove all medical apparatus such as the tubes, drains, and catheters and dispose immediately. The team who will be washing the body usually has the proper equipment and tools to remove such apparatus, tools should be sanitized afterwards.
5. Ensure any wounds are covered with waterproof bandages.
6. Test water pressure prior to starting. Please ensure that pressure is limited to what is necessary for the ghusl in order to prevent unnecessary splashing and expulsion of respiratory infectious materials from the body.
7. Extra caution must be taken while handling the mouth, eyes and nose and their respective passages; as well as the genitourinary system (private areas). These should be gently washed to avoid unnecessary expulsion of infectious material.
8. Upon completion of the ghusl, dry body and dry the table underneath while rolling the body, from one side to another.
9. The same ghusl team should perform shrouding to minimize exposure. This should ideally be done at the same location without having to transfer the body to another table or another room. In this case, there is no need to change PPE. However, if there are any new team members, they must wear appropriate PPE, or if rooms are being switched, then PPE must also be switched with previous PPE being discarded in the first room.



10. Please conserve PPE and avoid leaving and re-entering the ghusl room

Shrouding/Takfeen/Kaffan

1. The same team with the same PPE should then handle the shrouding.
2. Shroud the deceased with the appropriate amount of material.
3. Transfer the deceased after shrouding into the casket and seal.
4. Wipe the exterior of the casket and trolley with appropriate disinfectant as described above. Clean all involved surfaces with disinfectant.

Proper PPE Removal

1. All members of the team should discard their gloves, mask, and aprons in a sealed garbage container and should wash their hands and arms properly with soap for 20 seconds while cleaning nails and the space between the fingers.
2. Ghusl table should be washed and disinfected by a few members of the team and the floor should be washed after the shrouding.
3. All members of the team should remove their PPE (see linked video and diagram in Appendix 1 on how to do this) and place it in a sealed garbage container. The supply of PPE should be checked before the next ghusl.
4. Entrance to the ghusl room should be limited for 1 hour to allow for passive air exchange.
5. All members of the ghusl team should place their clothing in the laundry for immediate washing in hot water on their arrival at home and shower before interacting with family members.

Viewing and Janazah

1. All members attending must wash hands before and after.
2. Allow viewing to close family members only, and limit the time.
3. All funerals should be private and by family invitation only. Those wishing to offer their condolences should do so by telephone or other means of communication. Attendance should be limited to the innermost circle of loved ones only, ideally solely the primary mourners.
4. Advise any family members with the following (see Volunteer Criteria) should not attend a funeral or public gathering.
5. This is no doubt very difficult to do and we request you remain steadfast so that you are rewarded for not harming and furthering spread to others. Virtual tools can be used to assist family members in such situations. Please ensure these devices are sanitized before and after use.



Burial

1. Funerals should be graveside only.
2. At the graveyard, the carriers of the casket should be given disposal gloves to lift the casket from the vehicle and take it to the grave site.
3. Burial should take place as normal.
4. All those who carried the casket or touched the casket, should be given hand sanitizer to clean their hands and wash their hands with soap and water once they get home.
5. Mourners may bring hand sanitizer / wipes / tissues.

Health Authorities

In the event that the Health Authorities issue strict protocols on handling the deceased which may impact the washing of the body, and/or janazah being conducted by the community, we advise consulting with the local scholars for the legal opinions of what can be done. One such example could be that you may be asked to do the ghusl at the hospital, after washing, you may be asked to self-quarantine, or you be denied to wash the body altogether due to health and safety reasons. If the janazah salah is not possible, then the Salatul Ghayb may be considered under such exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1: Sequence for Putting on Personal Protective Equipment from the CDC (next page)

This is also available for direct PDF download from:

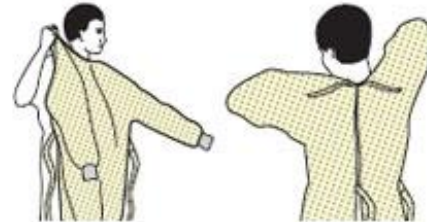
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/PPE-Sequence-508.pdf>

SEQUENCE FOR PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The type of PPE used will vary based on the level of precautions required, such as standard and contact, droplet or airborne infection isolation precautions. The procedure for putting on and removing PPE should be tailored to the specific type of PPE.

1. GOWN

- Fully cover torso from neck to knees, arms to end of wrists, and wrap around the back
- Fasten in back of neck and waist



2. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck
- Fit flexible band to nose bridge
- Fit snug to face and below chin
- Fit-check respirator



3. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Place over face and eyes and adjust to fit



4. GLOVES

- Extend to cover wrist of isolation gown



USE SAFE WORK PRACTICES TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND LIMIT THE SPREAD OF CONTAMINATION

- Keep hands away from face
- Limit surfaces touched
- Change gloves when torn or heavily contaminated
- Perform hand hygiene

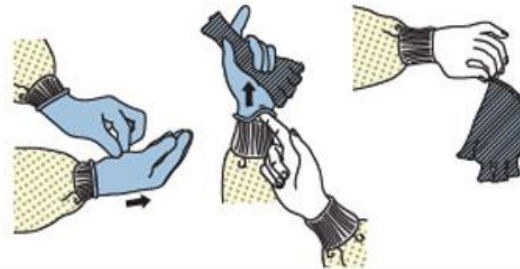


HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) EXAMPLE 1

There are a variety of ways to safely remove PPE without contaminating your clothing, skin, or mucous membranes with potentially infectious materials. Here is one example. **Remove all PPE before exiting the patient room except a respirator, if worn. Remove the respirator after leaving the patient room and closing the door. Remove PPE in the following sequence:**

1. GLOVES

- Outside of gloves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Using a gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off first glove
- Hold removed glove in gloved hand
- Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist and peel off second glove over first glove
- Discard gloves in a waste container



2. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Outside of goggles or face shield are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during goggle or face shield removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Remove goggles or face shield from the back by lifting head band or ear pieces
- If the item is reusable, place in designated receptacle for reprocessing. Otherwise, discard in a waste container



3. GOWN

- Gown front and sleeves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during gown removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Unfasten gown ties, taking care that sleeves don't contact your body when reaching for ties
- Pull gown away from neck and shoulders, touching inside of gown only
- Turn gown inside out
- Fold or roll into a bundle and discard in a waste container

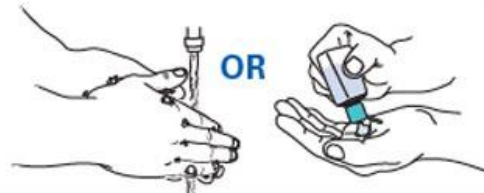


4. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Front of mask/respirator is contaminated — DO NOT TOUCH!
- If your hands get contaminated during mask/respirator removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp bottom ties or elastics of the mask/respirator, then the ones at the top, and remove without touching the front
- Discard in a waste container



5. WASH HANDS OR USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE



PERFORM HAND HYGIENE BETWEEN STEPS IF HANDS BECOME CONTAMINATED AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE



HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) EXAMPLE 2

Here is another way to safely remove PPE without contaminating your clothing, skin, or mucous membranes with potentially infectious materials. **Remove all PPE before exiting the patient room** except a respirator, if worn. Remove the respirator after leaving the patient room and closing the door. Remove PPE in the following sequence:

1. GOWN AND GLOVES

- Gown front and sleeves and the outside of gloves are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during gown or glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp the gown in the front and pull away from your body so that the ties break, touching outside of gown only with gloved hands
- While removing the gown, fold or roll the gown inside-out into a bundle
- As you are removing the gown, peel off your gloves at the same time, only touching the inside of the gloves and gown with your bare hands. Place the gown and gloves into a waste container



2. GOGGLES OR FACE SHIELD

- Outside of goggles or face shield are contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during goggle or face shield removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Remove goggles or face shield from the back by lifting head band and without touching the front of the goggles or face shield
- If the item is reusable, place in designated receptacle for reprocessing. Otherwise, discard in a waste container

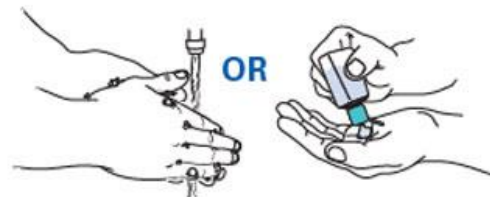


3. MASK OR RESPIRATOR

- Front of mask/respirator is contaminated — **DO NOT TOUCH!**
- If your hands get contaminated during mask/respirator removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp bottom ties or elastics of the mask/respirator, then the ones at the top, and remove without touching the front
- Discard in a waste container



4. WASH HANDS OR USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE



PERFORM HAND HYGIENE BETWEEN STEPS IF HANDS BECOME CONTAMINATED AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER REMOVING ALL PPE

