



Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING CLINICAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: DEATH: POST-MORTEM MANAGEMENT – COVID-19/PERSON UNDER INVESTIGATION **Policy No.: C113.13**
Effective Date: 04/2020
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PURPOSE:

To provide standard guidelines and procedures for the safe management of decedents known to be COVID-19 positive or a person under investigation (PUI).

POLICY:

For post-mortem management purposes, decedents who are known to be COVID-19-positive or to be a person under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 shall be masked before transport to the morgue, and a red tag shall be affixed to the body bag of these decedents to serve as a visual cue of the COVID-19 status of these decedents. This red tag is in addition to the regular tag. Do not put a patient label on the red tag.

PROCEDURE:

A. Nursing Unit

1. Wear personal protective equipment (Gloves, gown, mask, goggles/face shield), and use universal precautions
2. Place a surgical mask over the decedent's nose and mouth at time of death before starting post-mortem care.
3. Keep hospital identification band on the patient
4. Remove all jewelry and give to the family. If there is no family available, send to cashier's office or Nursing Resource Office (after hours) per policy B516 Patient Valuables. Document in the electronic health record.
5. Remove all drainage tubing, IV lines, and other appliances and dispose of them in a red biohazard container. Except in a coroner's case.
Key Point: In a coroner's case, all tubes and lines are to be clamped and left in the body as these might help determine the cause of death.
6. If ET tube will remain, clamp it or put a glove over it
7. Wash body with soap and water.
8. Prepare name tags in the post-mortem kit by affixing labels with the patient's name and medical record number
9. Place patient on shroud sheet with absorbent pad over genital area
10. Fasten chin strap, protecting face with an absorbent pad
11. Tie wrists together over abdomen with cloth strip
12. Tie ankles together using another cloth strip and tie a name tag to decedent's great toe

13. Fold sheet around deceased and secure by tying 3 cloth strips - above elbows, at waist level, and below knees. Fasten identification tag to the tie at the waist
14. Place wrapped body into the body bag, close the zipper and affix identification tag to zipper
15. Affix a **RED** tag to the outside of the body bag. **No information is to be written on the red tag including that the decedent was COVID-19-positive or a PUI. This tag serves as visual cue that the decedent was COVID-positive or a PUI at the time of death.**
16. Disinfect the outside of the bag with an approved hospital disinfectant;
17. Transporter/Nursing personnel will transport the decedent to the morgue. Use gloves when handling the body bag for transport.
18. Transporter/Nursing personnel will log decedent information into the Morgue logbook, and documenting “COVID/PUI” next to the patient’s MRUN.

C. Laboratory/Morgue

1. Laboratory Management/Morgue Technical Supervisor will be responsible for verifying the decedent’s COVID-19 status and communicating the information with the morgue staff. No information is to be written on the red tag by Laboratory personnel, including that the decedent was COVID-19-positive or a PUI.
2. If decedent’s COVID-19 laboratory result is verified as “not detected”, the red COVID/PUI identifier tag will be removed by the morgue staff as soon as this information is known.
3. The “COVID/PUI” comment in the logbook will be edited with a single line through “COVID/PUI” and initialed and dated by the morgue staff.
4. If results are not verified or available prior to the release of the decedent’s body the red COVID/PUI identifier tag will remain on the outside of the body bag in addition to the regular tag.

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References:

- CDC. (March, 2020). *Collection and submission of postmortem specimens from deceased persons with known or suspected COVID-19*. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-postmortem-specimens.html>
- Harbor UCLA. (March, 2020). Process for receipt and release of decedents identified as COVID-19 or COVID-19 persons under investigation.
- Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. (February,2023). Department of nursing clinical policy and procedure C113.10 - Death: Post-mortem care.

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