

Supplementary Guidance
for Handling of Dead Bodies of suspected/confirmed Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)

This is a supplementary guidance of “Guideline for Handling and Disposal of Dead Bodies” prepared by Department of Health, Hospital Authority and Food Environmental Hygiene Department. These recommendations give guidance on the safe handling of Dead Bodies (DB) that may contain Ebola virus and are for use by personnel working in Clinical Area, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Mortuary and Funeral. Ebola virus can be transmitted by laceration and puncture with contaminated instruments used during postmortem care, through direct handling of dead bodies without appropriate personal protective equipment, and through splashes of blood or other body fluids (e.g. urine, saliva, feces) to unprotected mucosa (e.g., eyes, nose, or mouth) which occur during postmortem care.

- The coordinator and/or the infection prevention and control staff should be consulted for any decision making on movement and burial of dead bodies.
- **The handling of human remains should be kept to a minimum.**
- The following recommendations should be adhered to in principle, but may need some adaptation to take account of cultural and religious concerns:
 - Only trained personnel should handle dead bodies.
 - **Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** before handle the dead body of a suspected or confirmed case of EVD. (Different settings may select additional PPE based on their risk assessment.)
 - Place the body in double bags. Absorbent material should be put under the body and placed in the first bag. Wipe over the surface of each body bag with a suitable disinfectant (10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution) e.g. 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4 parts of water).
 - Seal and label with the indication of highly-infectious material (Category 3 tag).
 - Immediately move the body to the mortuary.
 - PPE should be put on at the site of collection of body, worn during the process of collection and placement in body bags, and should be removed immediately afterward.
 - **Hand hygiene should be performed immediately following the removal of PPE.**

- Dead body should not be sprayed, washed or embalmed. Any practices of washing the dead bodies in preparation of “clean burials” should be discouraged.
- The environment where the body is placed should be clean and decontaminated with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution, e.g. 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4 parts of water) and allow to air dry.
- In the event of leakage of fluids from the body bag, thoroughly clean and decontaminate areas of the environment with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution, e.g. 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4 parts of water) and allow to air dry.
- Reusable equipment should be cleaned and disinfected according to standard procedures.
- The DB should be cremated or buried promptly.

Department of Health, Hospital Authority, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
19 Sep 2014

References

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2. World Health Organization. Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Care of Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Filovirus Haemorrhagic Fever in Health-Care Settings, with Focus on Ebola [Internet] 2014 [cited 2014 Aug 26]. Available from: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/130596/1/WHO_HIS_SDS_2014.4_eng.pdf?ua=1
3. Department of Health.UK. Management of Hazard Group 4 viral haemorrhagic fevers and similar human infectious diseases of high consequence. [Internet] 2014 [cited 2014 Aug 26]. Available from: http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947382005
4. Médecins Sans Frontières. FILOVIRUS HAEMORRHAGIC FEVER GUIDELINE. [Internet] 2008 [cited 2014 Aug 26]. Available from: <http://www.slamviweb.org/es/ebola/FHFfinal.pdf>

Precautions for Handling and Disposal of Dead Body (DB) of suspected or confirmed EVD

For personnel working in Clinical Area, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Mortuary and Funeral

a) Clinical area

Last office

- Wear PPE (cap/hood, face shield/goggles, N95 respirator, water resistant gown, long nitrile gloves/double nitrile gloves, and full length shoe covers/ boots).
- Absorbent material should be put under the DB and placed in 1st bag (a robust & leak-proof transparent plastic bag of not less than 150 µm thick) and zippered closed
- Wipe surface of 1st body bag with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution#.
- The bagged body should be placed in another opaque body bag and zippered closed
- Wipe surface of 2nd body bag with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution#.
- Attach category 3 tag & identification tag outside the opaque bag
- Move the DB to the mortuary immediately
- Disinfect the environment #
- Handle and dispose clinical waste properly according to the legal requirements

b) Board conveyances from sea, land or air

- Wear PPE (water resistant gown, surgical mask, eye protection, double gloves, shoe covers / boots).
- Absorbent material should be put under the DB and placed in 1st bag (a robust & leak-proof opaque body bag of not less than 150 µm thick) and zippered closed
- Wipe surface of 1st body bag with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution#.
- The bagged body should be placed in another opaque body bag and zippered closed
- Wipe surface of 2nd body bag with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution#.
- Attach category 3 tag & identification tag outside the opaque bag
- Move the DB to the mortuary immediately
- Disinfect the environment #
- Handle and dispose infectious waste properly

c) Mortuary (Hospital & Public)

- Wear PPE (water resistant gown, surgical mask, eye protection, double gloves, shoe covers / boots)
- Precautions should be taken in procedures of DB identification at time of body receipt into mortuary
- Follow steps in (a) if DB is received without last office (Public mortuary)
- Place the bagged body directly to **designated DB storage rack**
- Disinfect the container & body transport trolley#
- Autopsies on DB should be **avoided**
- **Relatives should be advised not to handle the DB** during identification and collection of body*
- Place bagged body directly into a coffin, and wipe the surface of coffin with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution# before send out {perform by undertaker}
- Disinfect body storage rack and environment #
- Handle and dispose clinical waste properly according to the legal requirements.

**Relatives should wear PPE if they want to see the body, open the outside opaque body bag and show the inner transparent bag with face only. Then wipe surface of outside opaque body bag with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution*

d) Funeral

- No direct handling of DB
- DB should be kept inside a coffin and in a **designated area**
- Following below measures:
 - Viewing in funeral parlour, embalming and hygienic preparation are **NOT** allowed
 - The DB should **NOT** be removed from the body bag
 - Unzipping of the body bag is **NOT** allowed
 - Cremation is strongly advisable
- The DB should be cremated or buried promptly

Notes

- Handling of dead bodies should be kept to a minimum
- Perform hand hygiene immediately after removal of PPE
- #Surface decontamination: All surfaces should be wiped with 10,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution, e.g. 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4 parts of water) and allow to air dry. Use heavy duty rubber gloves for environmental cleaning & disinfection