



Care and preparation of the deceased

Before starting any preparation procedure, you should check that the death has been registered or in the case of Procurator Fiscal/Coroner involvement that the deceased has been cleared for release. In Scotland it is presently permitted to carry out preparation and embalming once the Medical Certificate for cause of Death is issued however this should only be in a situation where not to do so would seriously affect the condition of the deceased or cause a serious public health issue. Check that all appropriate client permissions have been obtained and that the client has the correct authority to give instructions. Check and follow any client instructions.

- Appropriate protective clothing, including disposable apron and gloves must be worn.
- If the deceased is infectious refer to H & S guidance in preparing infectious cases. If the deceased is in a body bag and labelled 'do not open' we do not advise any viewing and preparation should be kept to a minimum.
- If Covid – 19 is confirmed as the cause of death or is a contributing factor then care must be taken with any invasive procedure. Proper full PPE must be worn and you should refer to the Public Health Scotland/England guidance on preparation of deceased.
- Check identification wristlet and confirm identification of deceased.
- Check for any jewellery, record and remove taking care to note location on deceased e.g. white stone ring left hand number 3 finger. Ensure that the client's instructions have been observed and if jewellery is to remain on this should be replaced after preparation.
- Remove all clothing except clean underwear/nightwear
- Maintain the dignity of the deceased with the use of a modesty cloth.
- Dispose of any soiled clothing as clinical waste or as per the client's instructions.
- Break down rigor mortis. Gently move the arms, legs and jaw joints back and forth
- Check if deceased has a pacemaker or other implant and arrange removal if cremation
- Wash the deceased's body with mild disinfectant and warm water
- Clean fingernails
- Dry the deceased thoroughly after washing
- Clean the nose internally, using cotton wool swabbed in mild disinfectant
- Clean the mouth; first remove any dentures. Swab the inside of the mouth with mild disinfectant and dry. Clean and replace any dentures
- If instructed by your client; in the case of a man, gently shave the face. Apply massage cream to the shaved area to avoid dehydration
- Close the mouth and support the lower jaw using a needle and suture.
- Clean the eyes with swabs and diluted disinfectant. Dry the eyes, position eye caps and carefully close the lids to conceal the eye caps fully
- Arrange the deceased's hair. Make reference to the client's wishes or use photograph if supplied; if the hair is soiled wash and dry it
- Apply cosmetics if requested by the client
- Sign and date the deceased tracking document.

NOTE: You should consider pre-emptive procedures to avoid any purging or leakage due to the build-up of internal gases.