

NMDOH INFECTION CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MORTUARY WORKERS (10/21/2009)

Given that mortuary workers will be preparing the bodies of people who die from influenza and the fact that influenza virus may survive on unwashed/undisturbed surfaces for days, NMDOH recommends the following:

1. Use standard precautions when preparing a body for burial. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) should be guided by risk assessment and the extent of contact anticipated with blood and body fluids.
2. Wear gloves. Remove gloves just before leaving the preparation room and dispose of them in a hands-free receptacle. Gowns are required as per routine practices if there is risk of contact with bodily fluids or splash incidents. When worn, remove the gown just before leaving the room and dispose of it in a hands-free waste receptacle. Workers should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water after removing gloves and gown and after leaving the room. Ensure disposal or disinfection of equipment used in the preparation of the body per accepted internal protocol.
3. If there is a risk of exposure to body fluids/splashes, the mortuary worker should wear eye or face protection. Eye or face protection should be removed after leaving the preparation room and disposed of in a hands-free waste receptacle.
4. Use normal disinfectants when cleaning equipment and surfaces that may have been contaminated with bodily fluids. Clean grossly soiled areas with normal disinfectants as soon as possible. Clean all high-touch surfaces within the facility (doorknobs, countertops, faucets) on a regular basis.

Mortuary workers and staff working in funeral homes should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza, including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue isn't available), frequently washing hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible, and staying home if they become ill with an influenza-like illness (fever of $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ with cough and/or sore throat) until they have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of anti-fever medications.