

## Interim Protocol for Handling Human Remains Infected with Ebola Virus

These guidelines may change as more information becomes available. This guidance is intended for the management of any person who has died and is suspected or confirmed to have Ebola virus disease (EVD). Ebola virus is a designated disease under the *Public Health Act* (C.C.S.M. c. P210) Dead Bodies Regulation <https://www.canlii.org/en/mb/laws/regu/man-reg-27-2009/latest/part-1/man-reg-27-2009-part-1.pdf> . The following processes and transportation arrangements are in effect for Winnipeg and all regions in the province.

1. Infected or potentially infected human remains come under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) whether the death occurs in-hospital or in the community. Prior to handling the body, contact the OCME at 204-945-2088. If after hours, listen to the message to obtain the on-call Medical Examiner Investigator's (MEI) contact information and contact the MEI directly. The OCME will consult with Infectious Diseases to determine if cadaveric sampling for EVD is recommended (i.e., person meets the person under investigation case definition).
2. In rare circumstances, where EVD is suspected after consultation with Infectious Diseases, but no prior testing for EVD has been performed, cadaveric sampling is required. When cadaveric sampling is required:
  - i. Contact the Diagnostic Services Manitoba (DSM) Medical Administrator On Call (AOC) at 1-877-437-4861 and the Cadham Provincial Laboratory (CPL) physician on call to advise that cadaveric sampling is required at Neil Bardal Funeral Centre, 3030 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and to arrange sample submission and testing.
  - ii. Follow instructions below for infection control management and transfer of the body.
3. Handling of the human remains of confirmed EVD cases as well as those still under investigation for EVD must be kept to a minimum.
4. Routine Practices and Contact Precautions must be followed for handling confirmed Ebola-infected remains as well as those still under investigation. For detailed infection prevention and control information as well as PPE that is required for EVD, refer to the *Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors Ebola Virus (EVD) Infection Prevention and Control Interim Guidelines* available at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/ebolainfectionguidelines.pdf> Routine practices and droplet/contact precautions must be followed when transferring the remains to other facilities or mortuary services.
5. Only persons wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) required for EVD should touch, or move, any confirmed Ebola-infected remains or those considered under investigation. A trained individual to observe the selection, putting on, removal and disposal of PPE to ensure health care workers (HCWs) are not contaminating themselves, must be done.
6. Medical devices (i.e., intravenous or urinary catheters or endotracheal tubes) must be left in place. The body must not be washed.
7. Wrap the body in a plastic shroud at the site of the death. Place the body in an approved body bag and securely seal the shrouded body within the approved body bag. Then place the body in a second approved body bag (containing an absorbent pad) before it is removed from the place where the death occurred. Wrap the body in a way that prevents contamination of the outside of the shroud and body bags.
8. A red colour coded "toe tag" should be attached to the outer body bag indicating that the person is under investigation or has confirmed Ebola Virus Disease. This will alert technicians at the receiving facility that special instructions are required for handling the body.
9. Decontaminate the surface of the body bag by using the RHA/organization approved disinfectant. Remove all visible soil.

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10. Following removal of the body, clean and disinfect the patient room and reusable equipment according to RHA/organization procedures.
11. Keep transportation of the human remains to a minimum.
12. Autopsies are **NOT** permitted on confirmed cases or on persons under investigation for EVD. Autopsies are **NOT** permitted on bodies where a negative EVD test result is received from cadaveric sampling on a person under investigation for EVD.
13. The remains of the confirmed EVD cases or persons under investigation should be transported by the mortuary service, Winnipeg Funeral Transfer Services (204-257-0877) directly from the place of death to the Neil Bardal Funeral Centre (3030 Notre Dame Ave, Winnipeg, MB) (204-949-2200). The mortician must be informed that the body has or may have EVD, the body bag is not to be opened, and that embalming must not occur. During transport:
  - i. Use routine practices and droplet/contact precautions.
  - ii. Wipe environmental surfaces of the transport vehicle with organization/facility approved disinfectant and allow them to air dry.
14. When cadaveric sampling is required, DSM staff will follow the DSM Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Cadaveric Sampling in suspect EVD cases and will forward sample to Cadham Provincial Laboratory for testing<sup>a</sup>.
15. If the body is not destined for cremation, the body must, at the earliest time possible after death, be enclosed in a coffin:
  - i. That is constructed of or lined with, metal or other impervious material and hermetically sealed, or
  - ii. Which is placed in a tightly constructed outer container that is constructed of, or lined with metal or other impervious material and that is hermetically sealed.
16. A label stating the following should be attached immediately to the head of the coffin or to the outer container, whichever has been hermetically sealed.
  - i. PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE  
This body is or is suspected to be infected with a designated disease specified in the Dead Bodies Regulation under *The Public Health Act* and must be handled in accordance with that regulation.
    - Do not open the hermetically sealed container.
    - Do not remove this label.
17. Viewing of the body is not permitted.
18. The body must be buried or cremated as soon as possible after death (within 48 hours), unless written permission to postpone burial or cremation has been obtained from a Medical Officer of Health. The body must not be accompanied by any contaminated articles. If the body is cremated, the ashes are not an infectious risk and can be released to the family.

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<sup>a</sup> All samples must be shipped in accordance with the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulation (TDGR) by an individual and courier certified in TDG. TDGR requires handling and transport of EVD samples according to the international procedures for transport of category A infectious substances (UN2814). See Section 8.0 of the online CPL Guide to Services for Packaging and Transport instructions ([www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cpl/docs/guide.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cpl/docs/guide.pdf)). Taxis and other casual transport are not appropriate. The certified courier must proceed directly to the receiving laboratory as quickly as possible with no other deliveries during this period.

**Process Flow for Confirmed or Suspected EVD Body**

