



## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

### Department of Health

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### Ebola Preparedness:

### Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Recommendations for Managing Decedent Remains

The following recommendations are from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) in reference to guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on safe handling guidance of human remains infected with Ebola. While the OCME highly recommends these procedures, they are suggestions. Following this guidance is at the complete discretion of the organization. Additional information on this topic may be found on the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/guidance-safe-handling-human-remains-ebola-patients-us-hospitals-mortuaries.html>

#### OCME Policy on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. For any personnel preparing the body for bagging, full PPE should be worn prior to contact with the body.
2. Loose fitting cotton underwear should be the only clothing worn under PPE and should be disposed of after use.
3. PPE recommended for remains containment and decontamination are:
  - a. Surgical scrub suit
  - b. Impervious gown with full sleeve coverage
  - c. Floor length apron
  - d. Rubber boots with shoe coverings
  - e. Leg coverings
  - f. Two layers of surgical gloves with an additional layer of thick rubber gloves on the outside
  - g. Goggles or full coverage eye protectors
  - h. FIT Tested N-95 mask<sup>1</sup>
  - i. Fully enclosed head hood (as seen in the picture on the right)<sup>1</sup>
4. Additional protective layers on the body and feet may be added so that in the event that the apron, shoe covers, etc. become soiled with infected tissue or fluid, these dirtied layers may be removed and replaced with new protection without jeopardizing the full bodied protection of the underneath layers.
5. Donning, decontamination, doffing, and disposal of PPE should follow CDC and/or agency guidelines. Additional information on this topic can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/whatsnew.html>



<sup>1</sup> An N-95 mask and fully enclosed head hood can be substituted for a Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR).



## OCME Remains Containment and Decontamination Guidelines

1. Do not attempt to clean the body or remove any endotracheal tubes or IV lines from the decedent. The body should first be placed in a heat-sealable bag.<sup>2</sup> Check and remove any tissue or fluid that is present between the two sides of the bag which are to be sealed.
2. Thoroughly heat-seal the bag's edges and try to keep all tissue and fluid inside the bag. Inspect the bag carefully for any spots that may not have been completely sealed.
3. Next, proper disinfectant (1:10 bleach to water ratio is recommended) should be sprayed over and under the heat-sealable bag and be allowed to dry. Make sure that once the bottom of the bag is sprayed with disinfectant, you do not set the heat-sealable bag in the same place it was prior to being disinfected, or you risk re-infecting the bag.
4. Place this heat-sealable bag into a body bag and zip shut. Again, spray the proper disinfectant on and under the body bag and allow to dry.
5. Lastly, place this body bag in yet another body bag and repeat the process of closing, spraying disinfectant, and drying.
6. Once this process is complete, this bag should NOT be opened again. The bag should remain closed and the body should be transported and cremated/buried in this bag.

### Heat-Sealable Body Bags

Bioseal Systems revolutionized heat-sealable body bags which fully contain both the decedent's body and body fluids by providing a temporary, flexible hermetically sealed bag for easy transport of human remains. CadSeal is another option which heat-seals human remains in a special metal containment film that encloses a decedent's body and body fluids, and protects against leakage and contamination to the outside of the bag.



*"BioSeal Systems® is fully committed to eradicating the zipper on body bags in order to provide a better performance product to the death-care industry."*

Information on BioSeal and CadSeal:

<http://www.bioseal.com/>

<http://flexmort.com/cadseal/>

### Hermetically Sealed Casket

While the OCME and CDC recommend that Ebola decedents be cremated, hermetically sealed caskets are another option. Hermetically sealed caskets mean that the container is air tight so that nothing can enter or escape. These caskets are typically welded shut to prevent the escape of microorganisms.

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<sup>2</sup> If the decedent is emitting excessive fluids, an absorbent pad may be placed on the bottom of the heat-sealable bag prior to placing the remains inside. CadSeal has such pads available through their website.