

# Registrar's COVID-19 Update

**Preparing for the surge**

**Removals of Deceased from  
Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities**

**BAO**

Bereavement  
Authority of  
Ontario

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**CEO/Registrar**

April 10, 2020



# New Provincial Procedure for Removals of Deceased from Hospitals and Long-Term Care facilities

- ❖ Thank you for joining us on this statutory holiday
- ❖ Key information for you today to absorb and follow
- ❖ We will send you the BAO Procedure document as a follow up, for you to read, refer to, share and print for your staff.
- ❖ **This procedure applies to all deaths at hospitals & LTC**
  - not just those from COVID-19

# Step-by-Step Guide

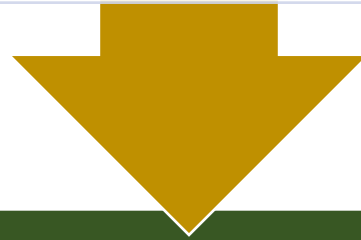
## Removals of Deceased from Hospitals and Long-Term Care facilities

### Context

- ❖ Yesterday – Ontario’s Chief Coroner prepared new instructions on the release of dead bodies for **Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities (LTC)**
- ❖ Hospitals and LTCs have implemented **Expedited Death Response Teams (EDRT)** or have designated people to expedite the release of the body from the hospital to the funeral and transfer service providers (funeral professionals).
- ❖ In keeping with the **Registrar’s direction to accelerate the disposition of the deceased and to minimize storage between death and disposition.**

# 1. What's Changed?

Hospitals and LTCs have changed their procedures for releasing bodies.  
**FUNERAL HOME/TRANSFER SERVICE STAFF WILL NO LONGER BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE HOSPITAL OR LTC.**

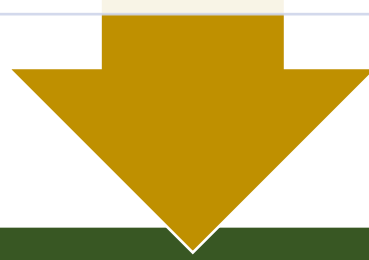


# 2. What's changed?

Each facility has **designated a waiting area outside its building** where hospital/LTC staff will **transfer the deceased** to waiting funeral professionals. Funeral professionals must be prepared to give their stretcher to hospital/LTC so that they may transfer the deceased from their care into yours.

### 3. What's Changed?

When a patient dies, the **family of the deceased** will be instructed by hospital/LTC staff to **contact a funeral or transfer service provider**. For hospitals, this will take place within an hour of the death. For LTCs it will be a within a maximum of 3 hours.

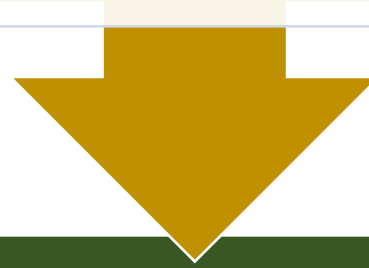


### 4. What's changed?

**EDRT** will contact funeral providers to alert them of the death and advise that the family will also be in touch. They will explain the release procedure, give you the family's contact information and will tell you where the designated waiting area is for their facility. They will also **inform you whether or not the death was due to COVID-19**.

## 5. What's Changed?

Funeral professionals should be ready to go to the hospital/LTC **within an hour (hospitals) or three hours (LTCs)** after taking the first call.

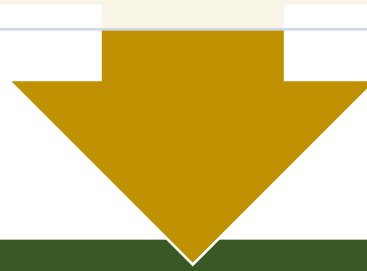


## 6. What's changed?

When picking up from a hospital, **the hospital will supply the body pouch.**  
**In the case of LTC, the funeral professional will supply the pouch.**

# Office of Chief Coroner (OCC) Team

The OCC Team facilitates transmission of EMCOD to funeral professional if the MCOD is not readily available at the hospital/LTC



## OCC Team Contact Info **(start Tues 14 April)**

Toll Free: 1 (833) 915-0868 / Local (Toronto): 1 (647) 792-0440

Email: [occteam@ontario.ca](mailto:occteam@ontario.ca)

## 1. What has not changed?

When you get the deceased back to the funeral home/holding room, **re-confirm the identity** of deceased and **check all tags/bracelets**.

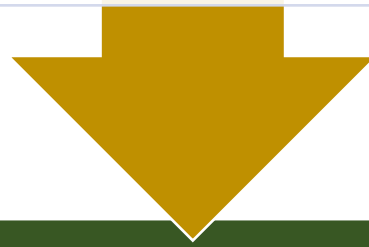
## 2. What has not changed?

You will still be expected to **provide your own and correctly use PPE**.



# 1 & 2. What are your responsibilities?

1. The stretcher cover should be removed from the stretcher before going to the hospital/LTC.
2. Have a body pouch available.

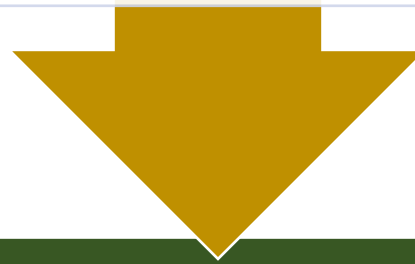


# 3 & 4. What are your responsibilities?

3. Make sure you have personal protective equipment (PPE) with you and use it. This includes gowns, gloves, hair cover, masks, shoe covers. Many funeral professionals are double gloving.
4. Perform hand hygiene before and after putting on or taking off PPE.

## 5 & 6. What are your responsibilities?

5. You will not be permitted to enter the hospital/LTC so hand washing may not be possible.  
**You must bring your own alcohol-based hand sanitizer.**
6. It is your responsibility to **ensure that you are following the instructions of EDRT** at the facility from which you are removing the deceased.

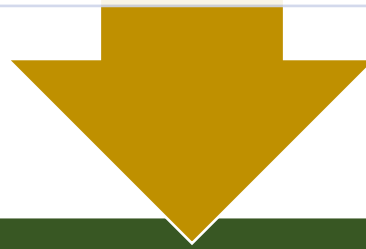


## 7. What are your responsibilities?

7. Before you hand over **your stretcher** to the facility's staff, **give the facility staff instructions on its use** before they take it away. Remember, these people are already trained in moving people, but may not be familiar with operating your stretcher.

## 8. What are your responsibilities?

8. Your vehicle should be stocked with **disinfectant or bleach solution** for spraying the stretcher and exterior of the body pouch and plastic cover if using one.



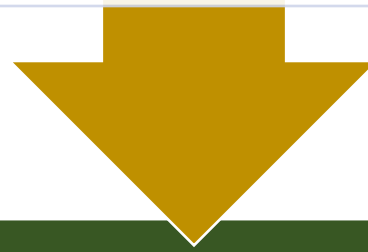
## 9. What are your responsibilities?

9. Remove **PPE** and dispose of it safely. If no receptacle is available at the facility, ensure that you have an adequate container in which to put used PPE or **proper disposal** back at your facility.

## 10 & 11. What are your responsibilities?

10. Use hand sanitizer.

11. Bring the deceased back to your facility.








## 12. What are your responsibilities?

12. **Whether the death was due to COVID-19 or not**, assume the possibility for infection exists and disinfect all equipment used during the transfer, including the stretcher and interior of your vehicle. Use PPE when completing this task.

## 13. What are your responsibilities?






13. Once in your facility and while wearing **PPE**, **re-confirm the identity of the deceased** by checking all hospital tags.

# 13. What are your responsibilities? PPE

PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT		
<b>1</b>	PERFORM HAND HYGIENE	
<b>2</b>	PUT ON GOWN	
<b>3</b>	PUT ON MASK OR N95 RESPIRATOR	
<b>4</b>	PUT ON EYE PROTECTION	
<b>5</b>	PUT ON GLOVES	

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[www.oahpp.ca](http://www.oahpp.ca)

REMOVING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT		
<b>1</b>	REMOVE GLOVES	
<b>2</b>	REMOVE GOWN	
<b>3</b>	PERFORM HAND HYGIENE	
<b>4</b>	REMOVE EYE PROTECTION	
<b>5</b>	REMOVE MASK OR N95 RESPIRATOR	
<b>6</b>	PERFORM HAND HYGIENE	

# How will the Hospital/LTC Staff ensure the process is safe and runs smoothly?

- 1 The deceased will be placed in a body pouch by hospital/LTC staff in his/her room\*.**
- 2 Hospital/LTC staff will ensure the deceased is labelled.**
- 3 The deceased will be transferred to a stretcher\*\*.**
- 4 The body pouch will be disinfected using protocols set out by the institution.**

# How will the Hospital/LTC Staff ensure the process is safe and runs smoothly?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5 | The identity of the deceased will be confirmed by hospital staff using a tag/bracelet affixed both to the deceased and to the body pouch. |
| 6 | Body pouches containing a deceased who died from confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 will be tagged by hospital/LTC staff.           |
| 7 | The deceased will be transferred from their room/morgue to the pre-determined, designated area and received by the funeral professional.  |



# How will the Hospital/LTC Staff ensure the process is safe and runs smoothly?

**\*** Funeral professionals should be prepared to provide their own body pouch, especially in the case of LTCs. The handoff of the decedent enclosed in the body pouch will take place in the pre-determined, designated area outside of the facility.

**\*\*** The funeral professional will need to provide their stretcher to the hospital/LTC staff upon arrival at the predetermined, designated waiting area. The hospital/LTC staff will bring the stretcher to the patient's room or morgue and transfer the deceased onto the funeral professional's stretcher.

# Be prepared to inter - no stockpiling

- ❖ Ensure you have the ability to inter **now**
- ❖ **Don't wait** to find out that the contractors are busy with your peers.
- ❖ **Do not delay** burials

# April 7 - Registrar's Directive

## 10 MAX or LESS

- in the entire funeral home

❖ April 7, 2020 – This directive adds a greater limitation on the number of people who can be at funeral homes, not counting funeral home staff.

# April 7 - Registrar's Directive – Qs&As

**Q1. Can I have 10 people in one visitation room and another 10 in the chapel room?**

**A1.** No. The 10 maximum directive means 10 people for the entire funeral home facility, not counting funeral home staff. This is a strict rule by necessity. Public and staff safety are paramount. Try to have fewer than 10 in your funeral home.

Remember, funeral homes, crematoriums and cemeteries are subject to the **government's law and risk prosecution** if they are not complying fully with the 10-max directive. Boards of Directors are liable.

**Consider what happened in Newfoundland**, where 75 per cent of COVID-19 cases in the entire province have been traced to one funeral home. **Now all funerals and visitations have been banned there.**

# April 7 - Registrar's Directive – Qs&As

**Q3. Do babies count as one person or half, toward the 10 maximum?**

**A3.** Each baby or child counts as one person. Please aim for 10 or fewer in your funeral home or cemetery. This is about minimizing the risk of spreading COVID-19. It spreads easily.

**Q4. Does clergy count in the 10 maximum?**

**A4.** Yes Clergy is included. 9 plus clergy = 10 maximum.

# Worth repeating: We can handle the surge...but it depends on YOU.

- 24/7 response – if you haven't already -- **get this organized now !**
- How will you obtain authorization from family?
  - Burial, cremation, or alternate disposition
    - **to occur as soon as possible**
  - Have back-up plan for everything you do
- Communicate with your cemetery and crematorium; you can share cause of death info with them
- Remember we're in a "State of Emergency"

# Electronic Death Registrations & Medical Certificates of Death

## **Electronic Transmission or Faxing of Death Registration Documents**

As a temporary measure, outlined below is an interim process to facilitate the issuance of a burial permit during these challenging times.

Effective immediately, funeral homes and municipalities may transmit death registration documents electronically (e.g., encrypted email) or by fax for the purpose of obtaining a burial permit. Please ensure funeral homes continue to work with their municipal partners as operational changes may be required to implement the temporary process described below:

- An amendment has been made to Regulation 1094 of the Vital Statistics Act to allow a copy to be made of the medical certificate of death. Effective immediately, a copy of a medical certificate of death may now be sent between coroners, funeral directors and division registrars (including deputy division registrars and sub-registrars) for the issuance of a burial permit.
- A funeral home may send a copy of the statement of death and medical certificate of death and/or coroner's warrant to bury through a secure electronic method or by fax to the municipality; and the municipality may send the burial permit and acknowledgement of death through a secure electronic method or by fax to a funeral home. Original registration documents will need to be sent to the municipality weekly, on a best effort basis, for processing.

# Support for the Sector

- **You are essential – officially and otherwise**
- I have asked the Ontario government
  - To treat the bereavement sector as they do health care right now
    - Specifically, this means I've asked for funding for funeral homes, crematoriums, alternate disposition, transfer services
  - For more PPE for the bereavement sector
    - **We know they are working hard at this.**



# Support for the Sector

## Funding Sources Available Now:

- Federal Government 75% wage subsidy program
- Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) - small business loans, zero interest, 25% forgivable

# Support for the Sector

The BAO is experiencing huge phone call and email numbers...questions are triaged for response, and may take time.

Give the Expedited Death Response process a chance to work. Don't call the BAO without trying to resolve on your end first.

Always monitor the BAO website for changes & updates

# Questions?

**Thank you all for the professional, caring work you do everyday – especially now!**

**❖ Ready Together - BAO COVID-19 info page**

<https://thebao.ca/covid-19-update-links/>

# Thank You!



**OACFP**

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CEMETERY  
AND FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS

## **Please Note**

- 1. A recording will be sent to all those who registered within 24 hours.**
- 2. No certificates will be issued for this webinar and the information provided is not eligible for Continue Education Credit towards.**

