

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS Precautions - Embalming and Morgues

On this page

[What precautions should I know when required to do embalming?](#)

[How should the deceased be transferred?](#)

[What precautions should I take when embalming?](#)

[What precautions should I use during clean up and disposal?](#)

What precautions should I know when required to do embalming?

Funeral directors, mortuary attendants, and anyone assisting in postmortem procedures must wear gloves, masks, protective eyewear, gowns, and waterproof aprons.

Consider all body fluids and tissues as potentially contaminated.

Please also see the OSH Answers documents [HIV/AIDS in the Workplace](#), [Personal Protective Equipment](#) and [Needlestick and Sharps Injuries](#) for more information.

How should the deceased be transferred?

- Wear disposable pants, gowns, and double gloves. If blood or body fluids may splash, wear eye protection, a mask, and a cap.
- Identify body "Blood and Body Fluid Precautions". Keep identification with the body.
- Check the body for intravenous lines, catheters, or colostomy bags. Take extreme care to avoid accidental cuts or splashes before shrouding the body.
- Place the body in a shroud and impervious body bag for transport. Do not open the bag in transit.
- Remove protective clothing. Double plastic bag for incineration.

What precautions should I take when embalming?

- Use disposable materials.
- Remove all personal jewelry. Wear disposable pants and gowns or a disposable jumpsuit with hood, double gloves, eye protection, mask and cap, shoe covers and plastic apron.
- Have instruments, puncture-resistant containers, and individual items, such as eye caps and trocar buttons, readily available. Place the needed amount of cosmetics on a paper towel or wax paper sheet.
- Line the garbage can with double plastic bags and place them in the work area.
- Use a medical-grade disinfectant to disinfect all potentially contaminated objects and surfaces both during and after preparation. Discard any leftover solution according to the safety data sheet (SDS) directions.
- Add disinfectant solution (as per the manufacturer's instructions) to an enamel, porcelain, or stainless steel bucket before embalming begins. Place the bucket underneath the drainage hose from the embalming table.
- Ventilate preparation room to control exposure to formaldehyde and other volatile airborne contaminants. The room should have a dedicated ventilation exhaust and fresh air supply.
- Place the body in a casket immediately after restoration. Have your head, arm, and feet rest tightly encased in plastic.
- Assign specific tasks with one person to do suturing.
- Make arrangements for a person not involved in embalming procedures to take telephone calls and answer the door.

What precautions should I use during clean up and disposal?

- Consider all instruments and the embalming table as contaminated and potentially infectious.
- Disinfect all working surfaces and restorative and embalming instruments. Wash the embalming table, floors, walls, and embalming machine with hot, soapy water. If possible, autoclave the instruments.
- Place all disposable material in a tightly secured double plastic bag. Tag for incineration. Do not dispose of it with regular garbage. Wash hands with appropriate germicide.

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