

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS Precautions - Embalming and Morgues - Procedures

On this page

[What are some safe practices to follow when embalming?](#)

[How do I safely dispose of used materials?](#)

[What are some qualities of appropriate disinfectants?](#)

What are some safe practices to follow when 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.

- Take extreme care to prevent cuts, lacerations and splashing of contaminated blood or body fluids.
- Wear two pairs of intact disposable gloves. Remove punctured, torn or leaking gloves. Wash hands thoroughly. Put on two new pairs of gloves.
- Wear safety glasses or goggles or a face shield (with safety glasses or goggles) when there is a chance of fluids splashing.
- Carefully transfer the body to the table. Avoid putting undue pressure on abdomen and thorax. Slowly unwrap body. Carefully put body bag in disposal bin.
- Disinfect the body with medical-grade disinfectant. Wash with a germicidal soap and rinse thoroughly. Keep water pressure low to avoid splashing.
- Pack and cover open sores or lesions. Pack orifices with cotton soaked in sodium hypochlorite solution.
- Use disposable shaving equipment.
- Cover the face with a towel soaked in disinfectant if using an injector gun.

- Cover rib ends with a towel if the body has been autopsied. Remove the viscera bag and put it into a second plastic bag for disposal.
- Use an electric aspirator to aspirate body fluids. Cover draining port to avoid flashback.
- Treat blood, body fluids and aspirated contents with a medical-grade disinfectant for 30 minutes before flushing directly into the sewer.
- Saturate any spills of blood or body fluid immediately with medical-grade disinfectant. Then, wipe clean with disposable absorbent material, such as paper towels.
- Wash the body with medical-grade disinfectant, rinse it, and towel dry it. Use disposable absorbent material to dry the body.
- Wrap the body in plastic or plastic coveralls before dressing.
- Discard rubber or wooden-handled instruments used to apply cosmetics. Discard unused cosmetics.
- Leave the embalming area immediately should you receive a cut or needle puncture. Encourage the wound to bleed freely. Wash with soap and water. Treat with fresh disinfectant. Bandage. Get medical help immediately.
- Wash eyes and skin immediately with running water should they be splashed with blood or body fluids. Seek medical advice.
- Spit out immediately any blood or body fluids that may have splashed in the mouth. Rinse mouth with water. Seek medical advice.
- Wash hands with a germicide after completing restoration procedures, after removing protective clothing and gloves, and before leaving the preparation room.
- **Report immediately suspect fluid exposure, or a needlestick or sharp injury to a designated person or health care professional.**

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

What are some qualities of appropriate disinfectants?

- It is active, not outdated or expired.
- It will not corrode or stain instruments.
- It needs to be broad-spectrum, which means it can kill bacteria, fungi, viruses, and microbes.
- It does not bleach or stain the skin.
- It is not irritating to the embalmer's skin or respiratory tract.

- It is not inactivated by the presence of biological debris.
 - Check the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) before using any product in the workplace to ensure compatibility with other products and instructions for safe use, storage and handling.
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How do I safely dispose of used materials?

- Check all local by-laws to ensure proper disposal of biomedical waste, hazardous waste, contaminated personal protective equipment, and potentially contaminated laundry.
 - Make sure all waste containers are clearly labelled.
 - Check the qualifications of the disposal company and keep all disposal records. Manifests must be maintained.
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