



The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure



Transmission-based precautions

Guidance for care of deceased during COVID-19 pandemic

Issued: 19 March 2020

This guidance was produced by the Royal College of Pathologists and the Association for Anatomical Pathology Technology in conjunction with Public Health England.

RCPATH unique document reference number: G200

The Royal College of Pathologists

6 Alie Street
London E1 8QT
T: 020 7451 6700
F: 020 7451 6701
www.rcpath.org

Association for Anatomical Pathology Technology

12 Coldbath Square
London, EC1R 5HL
T: 020 7278 2151
F: 020 7837 9658
www.aaptuk.org

Registered charity in England and Wales, no. 261035

Registered in England, company no. 077288551

© 2020 The Royal College of Pathologists and the Association for Anatomical Pathology Technology

Use of transmission-based precautions

| | Non-autopsy procedures Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission of deceased • Booking-in of deceased • Preparation for viewing • Release of deceased | Autopsy procedures Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other invasive procedures |
|--|--|--|
| Disposable gloves | Yes | Yes |
| Disposable plastic apron | Yes | Yes |
| Disposable gown | No | Yes |
| Fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask (FRSM) | Yes | No |
| Filtering face piece (class 3) (FFP3) respirator | No | Yes |
| Disposable eye protection | Yes | Yes |

General guidance

| | |
|----------|---------------|
| Body bag | Not required* |
| Viewing | Permitted** |

* Body bags are not required in terms of COVID-19 risk, but may be required for other, practical reasons, such as maintaining dignity or preventing leakage affecting the mortuary environment. Local, standard decontamination and disinfection procedures must be followed.

** There is a risk posed to mortuary staff from close contact with visitors and a small risk to visitors from contact with the deceased. **Local policy should be set** that covers considerations such as complying with social distancing procedures, complying with cultural requirements, ensuring visitors are made aware that there is a risk, asking visitors to view through a window, asking visitors to wear PPE, etc. Any decisions made by staff and/or refusals by visitors to comply with requests should be documented in the deceased's record.