



14th April 2020

Dear Community Members,

Assalamu Alaikom Wa Rahmatu Allahe Wa Barakatuh,

In the current environment of coronavirus containment and social distancing, there are new rules and regulations in place that will impact how we perform funerals and burials. Islamic law allows for burial rites to be altered to accommodate extenuating circumstances, however, this is done in a way that ensures the safety of the wider community and upholds the dignity and Islamic rites of the deceased.

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with federal and state health departments, medical professionals, Imams, community leaders and Islamic funeral services across the country.

The following process is recommended when performing the funeral and burial rituals of those suspected of having, or confirmed to have, died from COVID-19:

1. *While handling and preparing the body, funeral personnel must comply with the guidelines specified in Part 3 of the [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare \(2019\)](#) as published by the National Health and Medical Research Council.*
2. *It is not recommended for any person over the age of 60 or suffering from a chronic health condition to be handling the body of the deceased.*
3. *Any person having contact with the body must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).*
4. *If the body-bag is labelled as "COVID 19" it should not be opened.*
5. *Those performing the ritual washing should wipe over the sealed body bag from head to toe, after having applied some water to their gloved hands*.*
6. *Funeral shrouds (Kafan) may be wrapped over the body bag.*
7. *The funeral (Janazah) prayer can be performed at the funeral service or at the cemetery prior to burial. Attendees should observe all Public Health Orders relating to gatherings including social distancing, self-isolation, and personal hygiene guidelines.*
8. *The deceased body is then taken directly to the cemetery.*
9. *Individuals tasked with carrying the casket to and from the transfer vehicle should use appropriate PPE, including suitable single-use gloves.*
10. *The body should be lowered into the grave by funeral service personnel only.*

**Although it is recognised that there are several options for ritual cleansing (from full ghusl, minimal ghusl, tayammum to wiping over the body bag), given the risk of transmission albeit small and the current shortage of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), the safest option at this point in time is to simply wipe over the body bag.*



We recognise that traditionally family members play a leading role in these rituals as this allows them to process their grief and come to terms with their loss. However, it is a religious principle that one must avoid exposing oneself and exposing others to harm. These guidelines prioritise the safety and well-being of those entrusted to perform the funeral rites of the deceased, and we ask Allah to reward them immensely for the services they provide.

We kindly ask that family and friends of the deceased show patience, understanding and cooperate with the guidelines set by funeral services and hospital staff in their state or territory. For the latest information on COVID-19 please visit <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>.

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), in consultation with the Islamic Funeral Service providers in Australia, will continue to update the community as the situation changes.

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