# Patient Care After Death Guidelines

Expected Death with or without coroner involvement in a ward environment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ensure the relatives /next of kin/ those most important to the patient have been made aware of the patient’s death and know to contact Bereavement Office on the next working day. | 🞎 |
| Ensure that key staff are made aware of the patient’s death, including bereavement office. | 🞎 |
| Ensure that the patient's spiritual and religious beliefs are respected. Remember the Chaplaincy service can be called 24/7 via Switchboard to provide advice and support for families and staff if needed. | 🞎 |
| Ensure the deceased patient has been certified by an authorised person. | 🞎 |
| Ensure the authorised person has documented appropriately in the medical notes. | 🞎 |
| Ensure this information has been placed on the Notice of Death form. | 🞎 |
| Ensure that infection control documentation is completed, as per policy, and a body bag is utilised appropriately. | 🞎 |
| Ensure that the nursing notes are completed, and notes are processed appropriately. | 🞎 |
| Patient’s property must be recorded in a property book and stored appropriately. | 🞎 |
| Soiled clothing should be disposed of with permission, or securely sealed in a separate bag to the other property. | 🞎 |
| Jewellery should be removed and recorded on the property list. Wedding bands/rings can be worn and should be taped in place; this must be documented on the mortuary card and the property list. | 🞎 |
| Check the patient’s notes for the possibility of an ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator) or PPM (permanent pacemaker) and highlight this on the Notice of Death form. | 🞎 |
| Check if this patient is an organ donor and highlight this on the Notice of Death form. | 🞎 |
| Ensure that the patient has been discharged from the ward. | 🞎 |
| Any Persons under 18 years please follow and complete the child death process and statutory notifications. | 🞎 |

**Authorised Designated People:**

Verify: Clinical Matrons, Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACP), Site Managers, Night Co-ordinators, Senior Resuscitation Officer, Resuscitation Officer, Doctors.

Certify: Doctors

**Patient Care After Death**

* Place ‘No Entry’ sign on the patient’s door or ensure that the patient’s curtains are pulled close.
* It may be important for the family and carers to assist with washing, thereby continuing to provide care for them during the period of death. Prepare them sensitively for changes in the body after death and aware of manual handling and infection control issues.
* Ensure that the patient is laid on their back with the arms and legs as straight as the patient will allow. The bed should be flat.
* Close their eyes lightly for 30 seconds.
* Collect the patient care after death box.
* Ensure the patient’s hygiene needs must be met.
* Brush the patient’s hair as able.
* Refrain from shaving patient’s beards.
* Clean the patient’s oral cavity, suction if necessary. If the patient wears dentures these must be cleaned and replaced. If not possible, dentures must be placed in a sealed container, labelled, and documented on the property list.
* Leave intravenous (IV) cannulas, subcutaneous (s/c) lines, nasogastric (NG) tubes and urinary catheters in place, cap or spigot these**.**
* Protect against bowel or bladder leakage by using pad and pants.
* Stoma bags must be emptied and/or changed if a two-piece system is in place.
* Cover any wounds or drains sites with a dressing.
* Place the patient in a shroud or gown.
* Wristbands should be placed on both wrists, as able.
* The patient should be gently wrapped in one sheet, wrapping gently over the face to avoid distortion, followed by the body and then the feet (use as little tape as possible).
* Tape the Mortuary Patient Identification Card to the patient’s shroud/gown and to the outer sheet.
* The patient should be lying on a bed sheet, with a slide sheet in place to support staff with manual handling.
* Complete the Notice of Death form (ensure that any property left on the patient’s body is included, use a demographic label).
* Place the Notice of Death form on the patient’s body (do not use tape).
* Contact the porters for collection of the deceased patient.
* Leave the room tidy.