

Chapter H 17

PREPARATION, EMBALMING AND BURIAL OF
DEAD HUMAN BODIES

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H 17.01 Post-mortem examinations. In all cases where a post-mortem examination has been ordered or is approved by the next of kin it shall be the duty of the funeral director or other person authorized to remove the body, to delay removal of the body for a reasonable length of time until the post-mortem has been completed.

(*Note:* Hospitals are urged to complete all autopsies without delay. If this is done the number of cases where autopsies are permitted will materially increase and more generally meet the wishes of the nearest of kin and the funeral director.)

H 17.02 Holding of bodies by hospital. Hospital authorities shall make provision for holding bodies until relatives, friends or the public authorities determine what disposition shall be made of the remains, provided the hospital may cause to be moved bodies unclaimed after twelve hours from the time of death and after due notice to the local health officer.

H 17.03 Completion of death certificate. For all deaths at hospitals or other institutions the residence of the deceased shall be fully entered under item (2a) provided on the death certificate. All of the personal and statistical particulars required to complete the record of death (items 1 to 18) shall be supplied by the funeral director or other person responsible for filing the death certificate.

H 17.04 Preparation room. (1) The care and preparation for burial of all dead bodies, regardless of cause of demise, shall be entirely private and no one but the licensed embalmer, licensed funeral director, or registered apprentice shall be allowed in the embalming room during the actual process of embalming, except by the request of or with the permission of the immediate family or its representative. Upon request of the family or its representative the presence of a female shall be permitted in cases of a female corpse.

(2) A copy of this rule must be permanently fastened to the door of the preparation or embalming room of all funeral establishments.

H 17.05 Local interment, casket or case. Metal or metal-lined caskets or metal-lined outside cases shall not be required for the local interment of a dead body from any cause whatsoever.

H 17.06 Private funerals. (1) Public or church funerals shall not be held for persons dead of smallpox. Every person who attends the funeral, including members of the family, shall within 24 hours of attending the funeral or exposure, submit to vaccination for smallpox or produce evidence from a physician of successful vaccination within the past two years.

(2) Whenever death is due to cholera (Asiatic), diphtheria, poliomyelitis, plague, or scarlet fever, the household and family contacts of the deceased shall not be permitted to attend public or church funerals for the deceased nor to have any association with the public until the specific restrictions governing contacts have been fulfilled.

(3) The above rules shall apply to funerals of those dead from suspected cases as well as diagnosed cases of the diseases above specified, but shall not apply to those dying from late complications of such diseases after the communicable period is past, and after the family is released from quarantine.

(4) During periods of epidemic, diseases of any nature found sufficiently malignant to justify private funerals and in the case of death from unusual forms of virulent disease, apparently communicable in nature, the local board of health with the consent of the state board of health may prohibit public funerals of those dead from such diseases.

H 17.07 Preparation of bodies in quarantine. In the preparation of bodies for burial or transportation the following precautions shall be taken by the embalmer and his assistants. At the time the funeral director is called to care for the body of a deceased person he should ascertain whether or not the deceased was quarantined or subject to quarantine for any of the diseases enumerated in H 17.06. If death occurred while in quarantine or subject thereto as outlined in the previous rule, the embalmer and his assistants shall take every precaution possible in the handling of these bodies, and after contact with such body shall thoroughly disinfect his hands and remove any soiled clothing. All instruments, gloves and other utensils used in the embalming or taken into the room by the embalmer shall be properly disinfected immediately after being used. All fluids or other matters removed from such bodies in the process of embalming shall be mixed with an equal quantity of a 5 per cent solution of either formalin or carbolic acid before being finally disposed of.

17.08 Coroner's case. No embalming fluid or any substitute therefore shall be injected in the body of any person dead from violence or suspected violence without the consent of the coroner.

H 17.09 Transportation. It shall be unlawful for any funeral director to remove or cause to be removed from a hospital or other institution any dead adult human body and transport to destination, in any conveyance other than a hearse, mortuary ambulance, or by common carrier.

H 17.10 Preparation other than embalming; home funerals. Dead human bodies may be made ready for burial otherwise than by embalming when such procedure is found desirable; and when desired, funerals may be conducted from the home of the decedent or the house of a relative of the deceased; provided, however, that these services shall be performed only by duly licensed individuals.

H 17.11 Embalming in private homes. Any licensed embalmer may embalm and prepare for burial human bodies in the home of the deceased or in the home of a relative when such procedure is found desirable.

H 17.12 Preparing of body and conducting of funeral by family. These rules shall not prevent any person from preparing for burial, or conducting the funeral, of any deceased member of his family when such procedure is found desirable.

H 17.13 Removal of body from hospital. The superintendent or other person in charge of any hospital or other public or private institution shall not permit the removal from such institution of any dead body, if the remains are transported from the town, village, or city in which the hospital or other institution is located, until a burial or removal permit is presented.

H 17.14 Deputy registrars. When feasible the local registrar for registration districts in which hospitals, sanatoria or other institutions for the care of the sick are located shall appoint, in writing, some responsible person at the hospital or other institution as his deputy for the purpose of receiving death certificates and issuing burial permits. In no case shall a burial or removal permit be issued until a satisfactory record of the death is presented by the funeral director or other person in charge of making the removal.

H 17.15 Reporting delay of death certificate. Funeral directors are requested to report to the state board of health at once any unnecessary delay in having the medical certificate of the cause of death properly filled out.