



Islamic Foundation North
1751 O'Plaine Rd, Libertyville, IL 60048
March 29th, 2020

Bismillah.

The default ruling is that washing the deceased is among the farḍ al-kifāyah (communal obligation) for Muslims. What this essentially means is that if it is not fulfilled, the entire community bears that sin. This is from the Islamic legal and social perspective.

In Islam, we are taught to take the view of the majority of the experts in the field. COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads. According to the CDC (The leading national public health institute of the United States) and WHO (a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health) as of writing this statement, March 23, 2020, the Center for Disease Control in America has advised extra precaution be done when washing the body by wearing appropriate PPE but that in and of itself the washing of the body should not cause any danger as long as standard protocols are met. This formulates the basis for writing this statement.

COVID-19 and Funerals. CDC

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor_1584390222777

“No evidence that corpses pose a risk of epidemic disease after a natural disaster.” World Health Organization

https://www.who.int/diseasecontrol_emergencies/guidelines/risks/en/

Funeral directors should work with medical and funeral professionals to come up with guidelines to wash the body of the deceased.

Keeping the above in mind, if the body is to be washed at the IFN funeral home, the religious committee recommends the following

1) Have proper gear for everyone washing the body (Follow the guidelines mentioned by the CDC and WHO)

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/grp-guideline-hp-ic-precautions_for_handling_and_disposal_of_dead_bodies_en.pdf

- 2) Have proper training for everyone washing the body.
- 3) Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions are at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness and thus should avoid washing the body.
- 4) Follow the guidelines laid out by the governor of Illinois (As of writing this statement, all gatherings must be restricted to a maximum of 10 healthy people practicing social distancing)

As of writing this statement, the above four are not met, therefore IFN is temporarily suspending the washing of the body of the deceased.

The IFN funeral committee is working hard to see how we can wash the body of the deceased at another funeral home.

What if the body cannot be washed in the traditional manner?

In case, the body cannot be washed in the traditional manner, it is allowed to pour water over the body without scrubbing and without even changing the clothes of the deceased.

In case this cannot be done, and there is a “genuine danger” or “reasonable doubt” regarding harming the health of those around the corpse, tayammum can be done, in which case the one in charge of the corpse may while wearing clothes, wipe the face and hands of the deceased after touching a pure sandy surface. Tayammum takes the place of ghusl in dire circumstances, and this applies to both the living and the dead.

If tayammum is not able to be performed and the corpse is required to be wrapped up in a special sealed bag, the obligation of ghusl and tayammum is lifted and it is not considered sinful

The funeral prayer can be performed anywhere including the graveyard. Even one person can pray the funeral prayer.

And Allah knows best.

The IFN religious committee