

Essential Components of a Safe, Dignified and Medical Burial Systems for all Districts

Rationale for approach

- 1) The number of deaths in a district are to be picked up within a timeline of 24 hours after the alert has been called in
 - Removal of corpses from communities , Health Facilities and ETCs
 - Ensure burial at identified cemeteries and demarcation of graves for future reference

- 2) To maintain safety procedures during the process of SDB and ensure no transmission of EVD after the procedure with regards to disposal of PPEs, premises decontamination and vehicle decontamination

Essential Components and Activities from SOP Burials

Procedure: All deaths, including community deaths and deaths occurring at health facilities, should be reported to the authorities. A determination of the Ebola status of the deceased should be made by district health officers or a trained investigator before the body is removed by the burial team. The investigation will be conducted before the removal of the body and will be used to determine which bodies will be swabbed by a trained member of the burial team before the body is removed. In locations not considered high transmission areas, areas designated as either low or no transmission by the surveillance team, a certificate for determination of a non-Ebola death can be given to the family, if requested. In designated high transmission areas, all bodies will be collected for safe medical burials.

- a) All deaths will be classified as a confirmed, probable, suspect, or not a case.
- b) In no or low transmission areas, only bodies determined to be not a case by the investigator may be left with the family for community burial. Bodies that are identified as suspect, probable, or confirmed will be collected and buried by the burial team. Care should be utilized to follow burial practices that are culturally acceptable but do not put large numbers of people at risk. The Ministry of Health (MOH) does not recommend large gatherings during funerals during this time.
- c) Universal safe, dignified medical burials will be conducted in geographic areas with high transmission of Ebola, as defined by the EOC Surveillance Pillar. While all bodies will be immediately removed by the burial team, only suspect and probable cases will be swabbed, but the burial team will not wait for test results before the body is removed.
- d) In all instances, the death should be recorded in accordance with the vital statistics system of the district and registered with the birth and deaths office.
- e) Suspect and probable cases should be tested for Ebola virus RNA by taking a buccal swab (see swab collection guidance). In addition, the case investigation form should be completed and should always accompany the swab specimen to the laboratory.

- f) After the swab specimen has been obtained, the body should be buried immediately and safely by the burial team.
- g) Inform the family that a coffin can be used if they supply one but the body is first put into a body bag and should remain in the body bag before it is placed into a coffin.
- h) No burial should occur after 1800 hrs.
- i) Few (though not more than 10) mourners, including religious leaders, could be allowed to attend the medical burial of the suspect, probable, or confirmed cases, but are required to maintain a safe distance of at least 5 meters from the grave site.
- j) Following the burial, after the grave is filled in with soil, the family could place a memorial mark at or near the grave site.
- k) The district health officers are responsible in making sure the families receive the laboratory test results in a timely manner.

Components of Burial teams in the Districts:

1. The consortium formed to engage in SDB consists of the following agencies:
 - a. Red Cross
 - b. Concern World Wide
 - c. CRS
 - d. CAFORD
 - e. World Vision
 - f. IRC
 - g. ACF
2. All members of the consortium are funded by DIFID and are coordinated by the district command and control centres who send out the alerts for response. They are also divided in different districts and zones for operations.

Decontamination:

The process of decontamination will be rolled out eventually to districts whilst it is for now being piloted in the Western Area by PLAN international with an objective to replace mattresses, NFIs (non-food items) of the deceaseds and chemical treatment of the deceased premises.