

Mosques and Burial Services during the Coronavirus pandemic

Mosques are unique to other mainstream places of worship in that burial services are commonly offered as part of their directly controlled activities. You should always check, but a specialist insurance policy should provide cover providing appropriate risk assessments are in place.

Mosques, and other places of worship, may see increased demand for burial services during the current pandemic; the government has [produced guidance to help manage this and protect people](#).

Background

Funerals in Islam follow specific rites, this typically begins with the performance of a Ghusl Mayyit (the two words meaning “bath” and “deceased” respectively). Once the Ghusl has been performed the body is enshrouded in a kafan (white cloth) and close friends and relatives are sometimes allowed a final opportunity to see the face of the deceased. Once this is concluded the mosque will perform a special prayer (Salat al-mayyit / Salat al- Janazah) recited by the Iman of the mosque performed in congregation to seek pardon for the deceased and all dead Muslims. The body is then taken to the graveyard where all of those attending give a “shoulder” to the deceased person as a good deed treating them in the same way as they would like for themselves.

Risk Management

What is the Risk?

- It should be assumed there will be a continuing risk of infection from the deceased where coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) infection is identified.
- Infection arises because of aerosols generated in post-mortem handling of the deceased.
- It is estimated that viable virus could be present for up to 72 hours on environmental surfaces* in “room air” conditions. The virus may persist for longer in deceased bodies retained in refrigerated conditions
- Viewing, hygienic preparations, post-mortem and embalming are permitted when undertaken by agreed persons trained in handling bodies (there is no requirement for a body bag)

Managing the Risk

- Conduct a Risk Assessment ([Managing infection risks when handling the deceased](#))
- Eliminate risks where possible – In [Covid-19 guidance provided by the National Burial Council](#) they have advised that high risk actions that could lead to an aerosol spray should be completely avoided such as use of a shower spray or unnecessarily vigorous manipulation of the body. To make a ghusl in a controlled way the room needs to have good ventilation and can be thoroughly disinfected / washed down after use
- Implement control measures where risks cannot be eliminated – for example, providing personal protective equipment including plastic gowns, gloves, fluid resistant surgical masks and visors

** Environmental surfaces may include medical equipment surfaces such as knobs or handles on machines; carts and similar equipment; housekeeping surfaces such as floors, walls, and tabletops.*

CaSE Faith Insurance is a package policy designed specifically for faith groups including mosques. Find out more about [CaSE Faith Insurance](#) or download our [Faith Proposal Form](#); contact us on 0333 800 9858.

Useful link: <https://islamicportal.co.uk/coronavirus-deaths-and-ruling-on-ghusl/>