

Death Pronouncement Checklist

1. Required Orders
 - DNR order in place
 - Physician order to pronounce death
2. Prepare family
 - Review purpose
 - Review process
 - Who to call
 - Do not call 911
3. Arrival in home and Pronouncement
 - Be reassuring and confident
 - Address the patient, introduce self
 - Listen to heart for one full minute
 - Check pupils for fixing and dilation
 - Observe for respirations
4. Post Mortem Care
 - Inform family of the elements of pm care
 - Ask re: cultural considerations
 - Invite family to participate or observe
 - Place patient in supine position
 - Elevate the head of the bed, to prevent livor mortis which is the pooling of blood appearing as a dark reddish purple color on the face.
 - Straighten the limbs
 - Gently hold eyelids closed, until they remain closed. If eyes do not remain closed, moisten gauze pads and place over closed lids until they remain closed without assistance
 - Rigor mortis, the progressive stiffening of muscles can begin as soon as 10 minutes after death, beginning with the face. For this reason place a rolled up washcloth to keep the mouth closed until the jaw stiffens.
 - Wash body- While a full bath may not be necessary, remove all visible blood and body fluids.
 - Remove SQ devices, Foley
 - Leave in place PICCs, Ports, Pleurex
 - Replace ostomy appliances with new ones
 - If incontinence; replace depends, use padding
 - Change linens as needed, change pillow case.
 - Change into clean clothing
 - Comb hair

5. Contact physician and Completing the paperwork

- Contact the physician at the time of death – that death has occurred and where body will be taken.
- Have forms and black pens with you.
- For Massachusetts pronouncements you must have your RN license number with you. (Take picture of your license and keep in phone, or on a slip of paper with your forms).
- Complete forms according to the form directions.
- Review the directions if you are not familiar with them.
- Time of death is when you pronounced the death, not the time you were contacted.
- Leave form for funeral director

6. Disposal of Medications

- Disposal from High Pointe House
- Community Disposal