

## **COVID-19 Death Guidance**

### **Pulaski County, Indiana**

Date: March 26, 2020

The Pulaski County Health Department and the Pulaski County Coroner's Office both entities of the Pulaski County Government with jurisdiction in Pulaski County, Indiana, provide this COVID-19 Death Guidance for Pulaski County, Indiana. We have compiled this guidance under current guidelines and restrictions provided to us by the Centers for Disease Control and Indiana State Department of Health.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to all entities operating within Pulaski County, Indiana that may be directly or indirectly caused to handle the deceased remains of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is classified as a PUI.

A COVID-19/PUI death in and of itself is not a Coroner's case. By law, the Coroner must be contacted if the death falls into the category of homicide, suicide, accident, unattended death, or otherwise suspicious. If the death is both a Coroner's case and a COVID-19/PUI death, the Coroner will sign Indiana Death Certificate, notify the Health Officer, and fulfill any other required duties as normal. If the death is solely due to COVID-19 and the attending physician is unavailable or unwilling to sign the death certificate, you shall contact the Coroner who will work closely with the Health Officer to complete the death certificate. An attending physician, may complete the death certificate if it is not a Coroner's case. The Pulaski County Health Officer has guidance from the Indiana State Department of Health for attending physicians who have to complete a death certificate when death is from COVID-19. All COVID-19/PUI deaths must be reported to the Pulaski County Health Department immediately. If the Coroner is involved, the Coroner will notify the Health Department.

Under current guidelines, a decedent with COVID-19 must be double bagged and tagged. The outermost bag is to be sanitized with hospital grade disinfectant. Proper identification must be made prior to bagging and a toe tag must be placed on the decedent with identifying information and with a disclosure that the decedent has an infectious or contagious disease. On the outermost bag, another tag must be placed with the same information. The Coroner's Office will assist with this process if your facility requests. If it is a Coroner's case, the decedent is not to be bagged until the Coroner has completed his investigation. For anyone taking part in this process, Personal Protection Equipment is required as directed by the Centers for Disease Control.

When release has been authorized by the attending physician or Coroner, a decedent with COVID-19 or a decedent classified as a PUI is to be released immediately in to the care of an Indiana Funeral Home chosen by the next-of-kin. COVID-19/ PUI decedents are not be released to an Organ Procurement Organization until further notice. In an effort to protect your patients and your staff, your facility should not keep a COVID-19/PUI decedent for an extended period of time. Funeral Homes should be made aware of the timeliness involved in the removal process; encourage them to come immediately. You may contact the Coroner if there are concerns. The Coroner's Office has an operational morgue with an estimated capacity of 25 should the need arise. The Health Officer recommends embalming to be done immediately by the Funeral Home. If the family of the decedent does not wish to have embalming, the decedent is to remain double-bagged and buried or cremated as soon as possible. The funeral home must contact the Coroner and obtain a Permit for Disposition when the method of disposition is cremation, removal from state, or anatomical gift. The Pulaski County Health Officer may issue a waiver in writing of the 48 hour hold for cremation if the necessity arises.

Signatures:

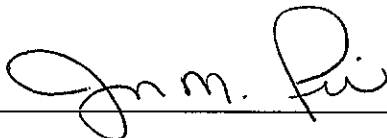


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