



MCB Recommended Guidance for Affiliates and Muslim Organisations Offering Funeral and Mortuary Services

16th December 2024

Purpose

This guidance aims to ensure the safety, dignity, security, and safeguarding of the deceased in the mortuary. It aims to protect the deceased from harm, abuse, or mishandling while ensuring strict control, accountability, and respect for Islamic and community values in accessing and using the mortuary.

Safeguarding Principles

1. Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding in this context involves:

- Protecting the deceased from harm or mistreatment.
- Ensuring dignity and respect during the body's stay in the mortuary and throughout all handling processes.
- Safeguarding the well-being of staff, volunteers, and family members involved in the process.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- Mosque Management: Responsible for implementing and enforcing safeguarding measures.
- Designated Lead Personnel: Ensures safeguarding protocols are adhered to at all times.
- Volunteers and Staff: Must be trained in safeguarding principles and respectful handling of the deceased.

3. Training and Awareness

- All personnel involved in mortuary access must undergo safeguarding training, including recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Training must cover cultural sensitivity, trauma-informed care, and maintaining family confidentiality.

Access Control

1. Restricted Access

- Access to the mortuary is restricted to authorised personnel only.
- Only the designated Lead and Ghosl person are permitted entry, with additional access strictly prohibited unless authorised by mosque management.

2. Key Management

- The mortuary key must be kept in a secure, hidden location with access limited to authorised personnel.
- A logbook must document every instance of key retrieval and return, including the name and signature of the person retrieving the key.

3. CCTV Monitoring

- CCTV monitors the mortuary entrance for security and transparency. Recordings are retained for a minimum of 30 days and reviewed if necessary. Random audits of CCTV recordings should be conducted before they are discarded to ensure compliance and accountability.

4. Door Alarm

- The mortuary door will be equipped with an alarm system to prevent unauthorised entry. The alarm must be operational at all times and regularly tested.

5. Background Checks

- All personnel with access to the mortuary must undergo appropriate vetting, including DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, to ensure suitability for the role.

Entry Protocol

1. Sign-In and Accountability

- A Mortuary Access Log must be completed by all individuals entering the mortuary, including:
 - Full name.
 - Date and time of entry and exit.
 - Purpose of visit.
 - Signature.
- The log will include a safeguarding declaration, confirming compliance with safeguarding principles.

2. Two-Person Rule

- At least two authorised personnel must be present in the mortuary when accessing a body in the refrigerator or handling a body in the mortuary. This requirement does not apply when the mortuary is unoccupied, with no body present, or during routine visits.
- If the deceased is female, at least one or both personnel must also be female.

3. Risk Assessment

- Before entry, a brief risk assessment must verify that all safety systems (e.g., alarms, CCTV) are operational.

Safeguarding During Handling Procedures

1. Cultural and Religious Sensitivity

- Staff must respect the family's wishes, particularly regarding gender-specific requirements when transferring body to the place of storage outside the coffin.
- Female deceased individuals must only be handled by authorised female staff, unless explicitly stated otherwise by the family.

2. Dignified Handling of the Deceased

- Only trained personnel are permitted to handle the deceased.
- The deceased must always be covered appropriately to maintain dignity during transportation or handling.
- The body must never be left unattended or unnecessarily exposed.

3. Prohibited Activities

- Unauthorised photography, videography, or any form of recording in the mortuary is strictly forbidden.
- Mishandling of the deceased is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

4. Confidentiality

- Personal information about the deceased or family must be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Discussions about the deceased must remain professional and discreet.

Incident Reporting and Safeguarding Concerns

1. Reporting Concerns

- Any safeguarding concerns, inappropriate behaviour, or potential harm to the deceased must be reported immediately to mosque management or the designated safeguarding lead.

2. Unauthorised Activity

- Any unauthorised access, mishandling of the deceased, or breaches of safeguarding protocols must be reported and investigated promptly.

3. Complaints Procedure

- Families or staff can raise safeguarding complaints confidentially. All complaints will be handled sensitively and thoroughly investigated.

Safety and Security Measures

1. CCTV Monitoring

- Monitors all access points to ensure security and transparency.

2. Regular Checks and Audits

- Management will regularly audit the mortuary to ensure adherence to security and safeguarding protocols.

3. Emergency Procedures

- Emergency procedures, including alarm responses, will be reviewed periodically to ensure readiness.

Safeguarding Training

1. Mandatory Training

- All mosque leads, staff, and volunteers must complete accredited safeguarding training every three years, including modules on handling deceased individuals with dignity.

2. Ongoing Development

- Staff will participate in periodic safeguarding workshops to stay updated on best practices and requirements.

3. Accountability

- Training completion will be documented and monitored. Leads who fail to complete training will not be permitted to undertake roles involving the deceased.

Review and Compliance

1. Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed, incorporating feedback from audits and family experiences.

2. Compliance Checks

- Regular audits will ensure adherence to safeguarding measures, access protocols, and handling procedures.

Template log for mortuary entry at [Name of Mosque]

All individuals entering the mortuary must complete this form.

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MCB MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

PO Box 57330, London, E1 2WJ, UK
admin@mcb.org.uk | 0845 26 26 786



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