PREPARING YOUR MASJID FOR CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

A Step-by-Step Planning Manual to Serve our Muslim Community
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INTRODUCTION

When a Muslim is afflicted with a certain disease, he has to look at it as a test from Allah the Almighty. Prophet Muhammad said:

“How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him.” (Muslim)

When you face trials and difficulties with patience, you feel inner peace and a state of psychological health that will help you defeat the disease.

This guide aims to help masjids in the United States plan and prepare for COVID-19. This masjid planning and preparedness guide draws on Quranic wisdom and our team’s research. We will share insights and best practices from our collaborative work with local, state, and federal public health agencies. Our team’s experiences with helping masjids around Chicagoland for the past 30 years have informed this guide.

Masjid planning and preparedness should not be developed in a vacuum. Successful masjid planning and preparedness should acknowledge the unique risks each community faces, as needs vary from region to region and masjid to masjid.

A plan is a tool. It doesn’t need to be large or detailed to be useful. The goal of having a plan is not to turn your masjid into a mini-public health agency, but rather to incorporate public health preparedness into your community. If you are spending more time creating a plan than working for the community, it may be too large or complicated, and it probably means it won’t be feasible to implement or sustain.

A PLAN IS A TOOL. IT DOESN’T NEED TO BE LARGE OR DETAILED IN ORDER TO BE USEFUL.

Some Reasons Masjid Preparedness Plans Fail

- The plan is not aligned with the mission or theology of your masjid.
- The masjid leadership does not model or communicate the benefit of preparedness.
- Preparedness activities are developed in isolation from the other programs or ministries of your masjid.
- Preparedness depends on the energy of one or a few people.
- Actions require resources (e.g., money) that may not be available or attainable.
- The masjid doesn’t recognize, support, or encourage the people working hard to help the masjid prepare individually or publicly.
We want to help your masjid prepare for COVID-19 by showing you how to build on the knowledge, talents, gifts, and resources that already exist within your congregation and community. There are numerous benefits to using the approach we teach in this guide, including:

- Building on your masjid’s existing activities.
- Not requiring a new program or large investment of resources.
- Making it easier to maintain and sustain your plan and preparedness activities.
- Providing flexibility to adapt as needs change over time.
- Allowing you and your masjid to act quickly.
- Helping you counter fear and panic with faithful preparedness and planning.

In each of the following chapters, you will find references to Quran and Hadith, easy-to-use planning instructions, concrete preparedness examples, planning templates, and prayer.

This manual will be most useful if you continue to add new ideas and adjust regularly as you learn more and respond to changing circumstances. As you implement your plan, be sure to consider how your masjid might help care for vulnerable and underserved individuals and communities. Also be sure to consider how to care for health, spiritual, psychological, and emotional needs in your congregation. Remember to keep it as simple as you can while responding to a complex situation.

_Dua: In the Name of Allah with whose Name nothing can harm nothing is harmed on earth nor in the heavens and He is The All-Seeing, The All-Knowing. (three times)_

[Abu Dawood 4/323, Saheeh Ibn Maajah 2/332]
CHAPTER 1: Planning Template

Whereas the Prophet once on a rainy day inserted an announcement in Azan that people pray at home. When Prophet’s companion Abdullah Ibn Abbas narrated this on a Friday for people to pray at home, some Muslims disliked it, dismayed, he responded: “One who is better than me did that. Juma is obligatory, but I do not want to force you to walk in the mud and on slippery ground.” (Recorded by Sahih Bukhari);

Whereas the Prophet of Allah has asked us to tie the camel and then depend on God; Whereas protecting and saving human life is the first and foremost objective of Shari’ah. It takes precedent over all other objectives of the Islamic faith as life is the basis of everything else.

Ibn Abbaas delivered a sermon to us on a rainy day. When the Mu‘adhin reached (the statement) ‘Hayyaa ‘alas Salaah’ he (Ibn Abbaas) commanded him to call: ‘As Salaatu fir Rihaal’ ((establish) prayer in your abodes), so the people looked at each other, so he said: ‘This was done by one who is better than me (meaning the Messenger of Allah – Sallallahu Alaihi Was Salam) and indeed it is Azmah (binding upon you)” (Collected by Bukhaari (2/77-78) and Muslim (2/148))

We can safely assume based on the Hadith above that a similar allowance can be made during a pandemic.

Action: Start with Prayer

Pray and reflect on how God might use your masjid in light of COVID-19. Consider how your masjid’s unique resources and current activities might be used to help those in need. Also, pray for guidance on how the most vulnerable in your congregation and community might be helped. Ask God to open your eyes to ways you might help amidst concerns over COVID-19.

Action: Reflect on Quran and Hadith

The way your masjid prepares for COVID-19 should be built on a strong theological foundation. We have found, however, that a lot of masjids have not connected the dots between their theology and how they will respond to COVID-19. Maybe your masjid has never preached a khutba series or hosted small group discussions about faith and public health issues. The good news is that your masjid probably has a robust theological foundation for grappling with common problems like fear, adversity, and helping others. Use this theological understanding to help guide your masjid planning and preparedness efforts.

Action: Leverage Existing Activities

The goal is to pivot your masjid’s ongoing activities in new ways that address the needs created by COVID-19. Rather than starting from scratch, begin with what your masjid is already doing to serve others.

CONSIDER HOW TO PIVOT WHAT YOUR MASJID ALREADY DOES TO HELP OTHERS.
Identify the current activities your masjid is engaged in that could be used to help address the impact of COVID-19.

- Use existing communications methods and programs to instill hope in response to concerns about COVID-19.
- Care for peoples' spiritual, emotional, physical, social, and safety needs.
- Consider ways your masjid helps bring calm and encouragement to stressful situations; comfort worries over COVID-19.
- Leverage ways your masjid is already speaking out on behalf of the marginalized and vulnerable; ensure the fair distribution of resources so that these groups don't fall through the cracks amidst the public health crisis at hand.
- Reach out to local and state governments for assistance and guidance.
- Partnering with other masjids or organizations to share resources.

Questions to Help You Get Organized

- **Is your masjid new to this type of work?** Starting small and learning as you go is the best practice. Initially, we recommend you develop a highly focused plan that is realistic about what your masjid is able to do quickly and do well to address COVID-19 concerns and needs. As your masjid grows more prepared and you begin to see what works and doesn't work for your masjid, then begin to explore ways to expand your preparedness efforts.

- **Does your masjid have operations that can be incorporated into your COVID-19 plan?**
  Outreach to groups like young families, the elderly, and the medically infirm can easily be integrated into your preparedness plan. Do you have a food program (like “Meals on Wheels”), an outreach to immigrants or refugees, or an education program? These can be ideal places to start when developing a preparedness plan. Before COVID-19 directly impacts your community, you could leverage each of the example activities just highlighted to provide education about the outbreak and share information about additional resources available. You can also ensure contact information is updated. If your community is eventually advised to avoid contact with others outside the home, you can exchange in-person visits with regular calls to check in on those you have been serving.

- **Do you have people in your masjid with expertise in this area?** Among your masjid members, are there current or previous healthcare providers, employees of local, state or county public health agencies, people who work for relief organizations, or perhaps law enforcement or other first responders? People with this sort of experience can help your masjid prepare. If people are too busy, consider creating special consulting or advisory roles for them.

- **Are there any special liability issues that you need to consider?** Consider reaching out to your insurance provider to see if there may be special liability issues your masjid should consider amidst response to COVID-19. Situations where there is a foreseeable danger can produce liability if the congregation does not make every reasonable effort to intervene or remediate the situation. Not all insurance policies are the same. Coverage amounts, deductibles, and payment caps can vary significantly. This is necessary before planning is completed, and it may protect you and your congregation from a lawsuit. Consult with your insurance professional to be sure your policy is right for you.
CHAPTER 1: PLANNING TEMPLATE

Use the following planning template to help your masjid prepare for COVID-19. This plan will be most useful if you continue to add new ideas and adjust regularly as you learn more and respond to changing circumstances. As you work on completing the planning template, be sure to consider how your masjid might help care for elderly, vulnerable and underserved individuals and communities. When completing the template, consider how to care for health, spiritual, psychological, and emotional needs in your masjid community in general.

**Actions: Start with Prayer, Reflection on our Quran and precedents in Hadith, and Leverage Existing Majid Committees and Activities to regularly monitor coronavirus risk and impact on your masjid and community.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Get Organized Checklist:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create and Schedule time for your health team (in person or virtually) to go through the guide’s step-by-step planning process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prepare to open your meeting with Dua and seek Allah (SWT)’s comfort and guidance and pray for those in need.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sharing incidents from the Quran and Hadith and reflection to draw out the stated wisdom that can help your team plan effectively. Ayahs and reflections are provided at the beginning of each step in the planning guide.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Share the manual with masjid staff, health team, and potential health team members, Step 1 (Get Organized) and Step 2 (Creating a Health Team) will likely overlap.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
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</table>

**Prayer: Allah, help us listen intently for what you’re asking us to do and plan realistically for what we can accomplish.**
CHAPTER 2: Create a Health Team

When there is an outbreak of a disease, Islam commands Muslims to practice quarantine. Prophet Muhammad said:

If you get wind of the outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; and if it breaks out in a land in which you are, do not leave it.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Action: Frame Preparedness Efforts in Terms of Health

Form a health team to help lead and execute masjid planning and preparedness activities to address the COVID-19 outbreak. We recommend the terminology of the health team because some masjids already have health teams. Though not all masjids have existing health teams, most masjids have significant experience navigating and supporting others going through health issues.

Action: Recruit Community Members to Support Staff

In addition to involving staff, focus on recruiting lay leaders who have health, leadership, and/or preparedness-related expertise from within your masjid. When forming your health team, define the leadership structure and each person’s responsibilities. This will create accountability and lighten the burden of those involved. In your community, identify who might be willing to be accountable for the tasks. Who are the members with a vested interest in the success of the plan for how your masjid is addressing COVID-19?

One benefit of forming a health team is that questions and concerns of the congregation can be tackled as a team effort, which relieves masjid leadership and staff from fielding all the questions and answering medical-related questions outside their expertise. It also promotes a sense of confidence and care to those in the masjid who are feeling anxious.

Action: Define Roles and Responsibilities

Define the roles and responsibilities of each position on the health team. Explain what should happen, when, and at whose direction. In case someone on your team might get ill, be sure to assign a backup person who could step in for each person on the team. Assignments could be made within the team or include backups not part of the initial leadership team.

Action: Monitor COVID-19 Risk and Impact

Monitoring and assessing COVID-19 risk is an important role the health team should assist with performing. In addition to considering how viable of a threat COVID-19 may be to your masjid and community, the health team needs to also identify individuals and communities where you are located that could be hit the hardest and struggle the most (e.g., medically frail, elderly). (See STEP 4: Focus on Masjid and Community Outreach for more on helping underserved groups).

PROMOTE A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE AND CARE.
How to Form a Health Team for Your Masjid

Your COVID-19 preparedness team (a.k.a. your health team) will need a champion—a health team coordinator—someone who is passionate about how your masjid can prepare and care amidst the outbreak.

Successful masjid preparedness begins (and ends) with leadership. This involves getting key masjid leadership on board with your vision for how to help your masjid get ready for and respond to this public health emergency. It also encompasses identifying and developing the right leaders to help you carry out your preparedness activities.

The average senior masjid leader is already overwhelmed with a wide range of responsibilities. It can be hard for senior leadership to take on yet another role. In some cases, it may be easier (and better) for a community member with a heart for serving others in times of crisis to take the lead in getting your masjid prepared. Here are steps for engaging masjid leaders in a COVID-19 preparedness program:

• Choose team members who will be calm and informed, such as health care professionals.
• Identify a health team coordinator.
• Ensure this team represents, or can lead and communicate effectively with, the different parts of your community which includes but is not limited to membership, various committees and event coordinators.
• Ensure at least one member of the health team is designated as the liaison between your center and the local government.
CHAPTER 2: PLANNING TEMPLATE

**Actions: Frame Preparedness Efforts in Terms of Health, Recruit Lay Leaders, and Define Roles and Responsibilities.**

Add as many people who are necessary to prepare and respond well, while remembering this team will likely need to be nimble and make quick, informed decisions. Depending on the size of your masjid and community, most teams will be able to perform well with a committee sizes ranging from 5 to 7 people.

Additional individuals may be added to help each of the 5-10 leaders as sub committees carry out their responsibilities as needed. You want to find a balance in numbers that will provide enough people power to do the work at hand while being cautious of having “too many cooks in the kitchen.”

**Health Team Coordinator (HTC) and Back-Up HTC Contact Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The HTC for our congregation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>First alternate HTC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authorized emergency</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>spokesperson (if different from HTC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Health Team Member Contact and Skill Information Form (to be completed by each team member)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position (vocational role at masjid and profession)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key responsibilities on health team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency contact</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency contact phone</td>
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</table>

*Ensure this information is collected from each team member and distributed to the rest of the team and the masjid staff.*
Monitor Coronavirus Risk and Impact:

The health team should work together to determine and update each category at least weekly (or more frequently if warranted due to possible rapid changes in the outbreak). In the table below, rate the possible risk and impact using the following scale:

High=3  Moderate=2  Low=1  None=0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBABILITY</th>
<th>HUMAN IMPACT</th>
<th>MASJID COMMUNITY IMMUNITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood coronavirus will directly impact your masjid and community.</td>
<td>Possibility of illness (from mild to life-threatening) among staff, members, or community.</td>
<td>Likelihood to interrupt or cause modifications to existing activities such as Halaqsas and Weekend/Full-time schools or Jumma Khutbas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on our current risk and impact assessment, we need to take these actions:

Ex. Cancel Weekly Youth Activities

Ex. Cancel Jumma or Daily prayers

Guidance from Quran: May Allah (SWT) guide us to make the right decisions for our community. Highly recommend consulting with IMAMs and doing Isteqara - May Allah(SWT) guide us to make the right decisions for our community.
CHAPTER 3: Develop a Communications Strategy

It is an act of sunnah to say these duaas (supplications) to protect yourself from coronavirus and other infectious diseases:

Prophet Muhammad used to say:
“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from leprosy, madness, elephantiasis, and evil diseases.”
(Abu Dawud)

When Prophet Muhammad visited any ailing member of his family, he would touch the sick person with his right hand and would supplicate:
[O Allah! the Lord of mankind! Remove this disease and cure (him or her)! You are the Great Curer. There is no cure but through You, which leaves behind no disease].” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

‘O Allah, make me healthy in my body. O Allah, make me healthy in my hearing. O Allah, make me healthy in my sight.
It is sunnah to read these chapters of the Quran on the sick person: Surat Al-Fatihah, Surat Al-Falaq, Surat An-Nas, Ayat al-Kursi, the last two verses from Surat al-Baqarah, and Al-Anbiya 21:83.

Action: Leverage Familiar Communication Platforms

As noted throughout this guide, the best place to begin is with how your masjid already communicates with leadership and with congregants. If you don’t already have it, collect emergency contact information from masjid members and leadership. If you do, make sure this information is up to date. Determine how the congregation will communicate with all of the individuals who are directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19. In some cases, you may find a gap and, for example, need to set up new group texts or messaging services to make sure everyone gets reached.

Action: Be Intentional in Communicating with Vulnerable Groups

Remember that some in your community may lack access to certain forms of technology, so be sure to discuss how you will stay in touch and support potentially vulnerable members of your masjid and community. Also keep in mind that your communications strategy may also need to be tailored to the unique needs and questions of vulnerable individuals and groups, such as conveying information to parents on developmentally appropriate ways to talk with their children about COVID-19. The same holds true when communicating with your community.

Action: Prewrite Messages

Consider writing template letters in advance so you are not composing messages during the confusion and chaos of crisis. For example, you can pre-write an email about canceling services, though you don’t know if you will need it. This will give you time to think through the tone and the message you hope to send. Also, think through the logistics of the tools you would use to live-stream, send a video or reflection, or however you plan to respond.
AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY should involve sharing how you plan to communicate about COVID-19. Decide when, where, and how you will maintain ongoing information-sharing with your masjid and community and let others know.

Communications Strategy Examples

- **Text-Messaging:** This service uses less bandwidth than cell phone calls, and many text messaging servers will continuously attempt to send the message until the cellular signal is restored.

- **Text Broadcasting:** Now is the time to implement group messaging services so you can broadcast text messaging alerts during crisis.

- **Social Media Networking Communications:** Examples of how social media can be used before or during public health crises include posting communications, sharing information, downloading resources, updating news, sharing geographical location, and taking or sharing pictures of developing events. To stay consistent and current in an emergency, follow your state-certified local public health department on social media and use their messages during an emergency.

- **Call-Down Procedure (Phone Tree):** Clergy calls assigned masjid leaders, leaders call assigned community members, community members call other community members, and so on. This system should include everyone who needs information, but especially individuals at risk.

- **Prepare for Media Engagement:** It would also be wise to decide in advance if and how you might work with media if they contact you about how your masjid is navigating COVID-19.

How to Help Anxious and Worried Members of Your Masjid

A quick skim of headlines reveals that panic has already been trigged, as evidenced by the buying up of protective equipment that isn’t needed or useful against COVID-19.

Not surprisingly, many imams and masjid leaders have begun sharing about members of their communities who are struggling with high levels of anxiety and worry about the outbreak.

**Following is a handout that you can give to members of your masjid who are struggling.**
COVID-19 HANDOUT: CHOICES YOU CAN MAKE TO STAY EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY

Pay Attention to Your Body and Your Emotions

It’s natural to experience stress and anxiety in the face of a threat we cannot control. Because every person reacts differently, notice what your body and emotions are telling you:
- Listen to your emotions, noticing any anxiety, sadness, anger, or detachment;
- Listen to your body, noticing any change in appetite, new aches and pains, or feeling particularly hot or cool; and,
- When you notice troubling symptoms, pause to care for your body and mind. If you become unable to manage or function well, seek the assistance of a professional.

Embrace Best Health Practices

Though there’s much about the COVID-19 outbreak over which you have no control, you can choose to embrace the kinds of practices that will keep you and your loved ones safe. The Center for Disease Control suggests:
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.

Access Reliable Resources

You can choose how you will receive and consume information about the outbreak. If you rely on panicked phone calls from your anxious loved ones, you’re likely to suffer more than if you choose to rely on credible sources. Two reliable sources for health news include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization. Also, if you become consumed by breaking news about the spread of COVID-19, you can also choose to step away from media reports for a time.

Share Reliable Information

Another way to care for yourself is to care for others by sharing the best information you’ve discovered. When you find a reputable resource that’s particularly helpful, share it with a loved one. When you learn about practices that keep people safe, let a relative who is vulnerable to illness know. In a culture where people are feeling anxious, you can be a gift to others.

Continued on next page
Practice Self-Care
In the midst of a stressful season or situation, many self-care practices are the same ones that prove helpful in everyday living:
- Maintain your normal routines.
- Connect with family and friends.
- Eat well.
- Stay active.
- Get adequate rest.
- Do enjoyable activities.
- Employ coping skills, like mindfulness exercises or prayer.

Support Each Other
We should avoid going through extreme stress alone, so this is also a time for members of the community to care for each other. Here are two questions to keep asking yourself:
- What opportunities do I have to help others in our community?
- What is overwhelming and what I should ask for help with?

While it feels like there is a lot we can’t control amidst concerns over COVID-19, every one of us can make choices to stay emotionally healthy.
CHAPTER 3: PLANNING TEMPLATE

*Actions: Leverage Familiar Communication Platforms, Be Intentional in Communicating with Vulnerable Groups, and Prewrite Messages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should you communicate?</th>
<th>Who are you communicating to? (Ex: Musallis, staff, local government)</th>
<th>Who should communicate the message? (Ex: Health Team Coordinator, IMAM, President)</th>
<th>How should it be communicated? (Ex: electronically, phone call/tree, mail)</th>
<th>Preparatory Actions (Ex: talking points, key messages, training)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Masjid to date</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Impact</td>
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<td>Jumma Khutbas or gatherings (e.g., Salats, Janazas,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth activities) offered or changed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funds or supplies needed</td>
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<td>Volunteers needed</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</table>
Directions for updating the masjid voicemail, including remotely:

Person responsible: 
Alternate: 

Directions for sending masjid emails and texts, including remotely:

Person responsible: 
Alternate: 

Ensure you are clear with your masjid community how you will use these different channels of communication. For example, how will they learn if the Fajr Salat is canceled? And also consider that different people may have different tools available (e.g., if some don’t have a computer or email address).

Additional communication directions:
Sample Calling Tree (ex. Board members calling Committee Chairs calling committees who will share messages with others).

Instead of using a “Committee Chair” model, some masjijds may decide to divide a list of people from their “Senior Program Committee” and list of “Vulnerable/sick Zakat eligible members” who need to be checked in with regularly among staff and laypeople. For example, each person would get a list of several people who they are committed to checking in with daily or every other day. In these circumstances, it can be as simple as:

**Check-in List**

Person Responsible name & number

Check-in recipient name and number:

Check-in recipient name and number:

Check-in recipient name and number:
CHAPTER 4: Focus on Masjid and Community Outreach

In the Quran, Allah says:

*Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. (Al-Araf 7: 157)*

Action: Provide Vetted Information from Trusted Resources

Make prevention education and outreach part of your everyday activities. Share up-to-date, trusted, and vetted information on COVID-19—information that fosters preparedness rather than stoking fear. Look for ways to share helpful updates and information. Programs such as health education can be a service your masjid offers. Other examples of things your masjid can do to reduce the risk and impact of COVID-19 include:

- Provide information from local, state, and federal public health agencies on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Educate others on infection prevention habits, like proper handwashing techniques and other common practices frequently taught to combat influenza.
- Teach infection control strategies at meetings and events, like reminding others to stay home if they feel ill or are starting to feel ill.
- Post fliers and reminders of healthful habits, including “cover your cough” and “stop the spread of germs.”
- Disseminate information regarding healthful infection prevention habits through emails, phone messages, text messages, handouts, social media platforms, and your website.
- Partner with local, state, or federal agencies or trusted nonprofits with public health expertise to provide training on COVID-19 for members of your masjid and community. This could be conducted in person or online through webinars, for example.

**MAKE PREVENTION EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PART OF YOUR EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES**
Action: Focus on Underserved Individuals and Communities

COVID-19 is likely to disproportionately impact the socially and economically vulnerable. God has called for us to care for those in need.

In this season when we’re facing COVID-19, there is an immediate and pressing need. God’s commandment to bring good news and healing to those who suffer is clear. As Muslims, we are created in the image of a loving, merciful, and gracious God, a God whose prophets taught us to open our hearts and use our talents in service of His creation. Thinking about preparedness differently is an opportunity to help your masjid more effectively reduce potential harm to the most vulnerable.

Here are some examples of vulnerable people in your masjid and community whom you should keep in mind as you plan:

- Older people are especially vulnerable to this virus. We can focus on reducing their risk of exposure and also plan, for example, to provide extra social support (by phone, computer) if your community moves into a phase of significantly reduced social contact.
- Children and families with limited resources may rely on school meal programs as a significant source of food security. If schools close, it will be important to help ensure these children and families get enough food.
- People whose health is already compromised in ways such as respiratory illness are especially vulnerable, so we can work to support them in holistic ways.
- People whose income will or already has dropped quickly (for example, service jobs, travel industry) is another group for whom the masjid should be paying special attention as you plan.
- People of Asian descent have faced stigmatization and discrimination because the COVID-19 outbreak has its origins in China. Your masjid has an important role in promoting faithful preparedness, and also in reducing fearful panic and prejudice.

Outreach Examples

- Include inserts in the worship bulletin that encourage preparedness and/or provide steps for developing and implementing a preparedness plan.
- Include preparedness messaging with other congregational announcements.
- Regularly set aside a segment of time during meetings or worship services for updates by congregational leadership on COVID-19.
- Post informational flyers in your building or on your website and social media.
- Have the imams and other masjid leaders publicly show their support of planning and preparedness.
- Develop a khutba or khutba series focusing on theological issues related to preparedness-related topics.
- Encourage masjid small groups to study Quranic examples of preparedness together (this could be done in person if safe to do so or via virtual small group meetings).
**CHAPTER 4: PLANNING TEMPLATE**

**Actions: Provide Vetted Information from Trusted Resources and Focus on Underserved Individuals and Communities**

Select a few of these services from examples below that you will provide to underserved masjid members and communities and describe how each will be carried out:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Sample Outreach Actions</th>
<th>How Action Will be Achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masjid staff and lay leaders model preparedness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote faithful preparedness (e.g., in Sunday school, khatbas, Quranic studies)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disseminate vetted information from trusted resources to reduce panic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Health Screening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Outreach &amp; support to vulnerable populations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Home visits/or calls if advised against meeting in person</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Language translation</td>
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<td>Legal assistance</td>
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<td>Listening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Managing volunteers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Managing donations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Food services (cooking, feeding &amp; distribution including home delivery)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improve access to community healthcare services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Special or alternative (e.g., Streaming) worship services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Encourage individual/family Other</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER 5: Strengthen Preparedness Through Collaborations

In the Quran, Allah says:

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. (Al-Araf 7: 157)

Action: Work with Other Masjids

Working with other masjids allows you to make connections locally, regionally, and even perhaps nationally or globally. These connections allow you to share knowledge and resources and to learn from others. Talk with other imams from masjids in your area to discuss the possibility of working together. Consider the following topics:

- Discuss how COVID-19 could affect your community.
- Explore ways you might collaborate with other masjids. This could include national, regional, and local denominational bodies to which you’re connected.
- Identify the special resources that each house of worship possesses (and potential gaps in knowledge, skills, resources, and capacity). Discuss ways to share, and avoid duplicating, your efforts.
- Create a simple plan for coordinating and sharing resources and for filling potential gaps.
- Partner with public health, emergency response, government, or nonprofit groups; many groups around the U.S. are offering virtual-planning meetings.
- Describe the role of each participating group based on its unique resources.
- Arrange a mutual-support agreement with masjids located in a different area so support is available in the event your masjid is significantly impacted by COVID-19.
- Identify the contact person for each masjid, plus a backup person, in case the main contact is unavailable. Include multiple ways to contact this person.
- Include a schedule for updating information such as contacts, organizational needs, and resource availability
- Assign a coordinator for the plan, someone who will ensure the plan is current and follow and update the schedule
- Work together to modify the plan and address any challenges or problems

WHY YOU SHOULD COLLABORATE WITH OTHER MASJIDS AND PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES

Working with other masjids and public health agencies can greatly improve your ability to respond during a public health crisis. It allows masjids to focus on things they do well while being supported by other masjids in aspects they find more difficult.
CHAPTER 5: PLANNING TEMPLATE

*Actions: Work with Other Masjids and Consult with Local Public Health Agencies*

Use the following checklist to consider ways your masjid might plan to build collaborations to help better prepare:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sample Collaborative Actions</th>
<th>How Action Will Be Achieved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connect with a network with other masjids that share preparedness ideas and resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify other masjids or agencies in your community who are working on preparedness to learn from, consult, and network</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Host a webinar or seminar on how to prepare for the coronavirus for your masjid and community members</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER 6: Adapt to Changing Needs

Action: Stay Informed

Staying informed by following updates disseminated by local, state, and federal public health agencies is key to putting preparedness into action. Seek out and listen to trusted sources that have been monitoring COVID-19 and issuing updated information, resources, and recommendations. Though not meant to serve as an exhaustive list, here are a few agencies that you might consider looking to for information (in alphabetical order):

- Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Healthcare Ready
- Johns Hopkins University CSSSE Interactive Web-Based COVID-19 Dashboard
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- World Health Organization (WHO)

As noted earlier, masjids are also encouraged to reach out to local public health agencies and establish relationships. Research shows that partnerships between faith-based organizations and public health agencies can help save lives.

Action: Consider Modifying Practices

Masjids offer significant social support that enhances resilience, yet when it comes to public health emergencies like COVID-19, this can put masjids in a high-density outbreak region at greater risk. As central gathering places, masjids need to think through how typical patterns of coming together put people at risk. For example, think about how worship practices and greeting times may need to be modified to limit exposure. Different masjids will be less or more hesitant to adapt to practices. Take for example: the step of sajda during salat. When praying in the masjid, the fact that one needs to put their face near the ground during sajda, when many other people have also been in the same position, may lead to the transmission of disease. Instead, consider urging community members to bring their own prayer rug or laying down a paper that can be disposed after usage (i.e. a role of the paper tablecloth).

EVEN WITH YOUR BEST PREPAREDNESS
there is almost always an element of surprise and accompanying confusion when it’s time to roll out the plan and take action. The good news is that there are steps your masjid can take to help navigate the unexpected.
Explore modifications to practices that could reduce the number of “touches.” If you are a faith leader who decides to implement some changes to typical practices, make sure you take time to communicate the reasoning and process that went into the conclusion.

**Action: Adapt Services if Needed**

Updated information is made available, please adapt your community to the guidelines given by the local and federal authorities.

Regardless, now is the time for masjid leadership and members to put plans in place to inform attendance and closure decisions should they be needed at some point. Masjid leaders should begin talking about possible ways to adapt to COVID-19, which includes alternative meeting approaches if the masjid body is unable to gather. For example, some masjids already stream services or communicate with each other over social media, and that may be an option for fostering community if meeting in person is not possible.

In these cases, however, don’t forget those in your masjid who may be homebound, unable to afford technology or lack access to it, and those who are not as tech-savvy. Also, some in your masjid might struggle if your masjid doesn’t gather because they lack a strong social network outside the masjid. Though there aren’t any perfect solutions, and although these discussions can be difficult, it’s better to have them now versus later.

If you anticipate that alternative meeting and worship approaches might be needed, be sure to talk with your staff on how they might work remotely. Similarly, you should talk with your staff about how your masjid will navigate potential employee absences. Should your local, state, or a federal agency warn against public gatherings or advise congregations (or your masjid specifically) not meet, take the advice seriously. Follow the guidelines and instructions provided.

**A Review: Preparing Your Masjid Checklist**

- Get organized
- Create a health team
- Develop a communication strategy
- Focus on masjid and community outreach
- Strengthen preparedness through collaborations
- Adapt to changing needs
CHAPTER 6: PLANNING TEMPLATE

Actions: Stay Informed, Consider Modifying Practices, and Adapt Services if Needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly monitor coronavirus risk and impact on your masjid and community. Assess your masjid’s activity and progress toward helping your masjid and community prepare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make gaps in your plan and preparedness known to other leaders so that you can work toward solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revisit your plan regularly and update the plan so it remains viable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to communicate your plan as it changes to masjid members and partnering masjids and agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. **Up to date information on how Illinois is handling the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)-Illinois Department of Public Health:**
   http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/faq

2. **COVID-19 - Schools Guidance – School checklist, CDC Guidance, etc.:**
   http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/schools-guidance

3. **Economic Assistance for Illinois families and applying for unemployment insurance:**
   http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/schools-guidance

4. **Where to get the COVID-19 test?**
   Enter your zip code to find out the nearest COVID-19 test site. (from US HRSA.gov website)
   https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/
   1. Go to clinics instead of crowded large facilities.
   2. Fees: Testing and Treatments are free.

   If confirmed, home isolation for 14 days, please help stop spreading COVID-19.
   Proactive screening to stop the spreads.
CHAPTER 7: BURIAL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Introduction

Directives of local public health departments, limiting the size of public gatherings, run contrary to the religious practices for Janazah services. Opinions vary as to how the Janazah is to be conducted, complicating the decision for families of the deceased.

We have gathered the opinions of reputable sources, both local and national, to offer as guidance for Muslim families. We prayed that this information provides guidance when making decisions for the burial of a family member.

In Islamic Sharia, the right of preservation of the alive is prior to the right of the deceased. Under such understanding, the preparedness to offer the deceased bodies their rights in Ghusul washing, Kafann and burial has to be conducted in total care for those offering such services or being part of it.

First, if one person died in the pandemic of COVID-19, he or she shall be declared as a martyr as included in the Hadith of the prophet SAAW narrated by Imam Muslim: "and one who died in a plaque is a martyr." Based on that, he or she shall be in no need of Ghusul or Kafann. He or she shall be offered the Janazah prayer and buried as is.

Second, if one died of a normal death not related to a pandemic, all preventive measures should be carried by people performing the needed rights for the deceased to make sure no one is affected by such pandemic.

Keep in mind:

- Since Janazah rituals are under the Fardd Kifaya (meaning if done by few it is sufficient) then there is no need for normal regular numbers to be involved in being around the body during Ghusul, Kafann or burial.
- Even if one person offered Ghusul and Kafann and one person offered Janazah prayer it is sufficient.
- Codes for private companies are also respected next to State regulations. In other words, families should respect funeral homes and cemeteries regulations as to numbers and distances.
- Although, funerals are to be done with no delays, in such times all delays related to proper preparation are allowed.
- Wakes after burials were permitted based on necessity. In such pandemic no need to open places for wakes (Aza) even at homes.

- Sheikh Kifah Mustapha
Chairman of CIOGC Imams Council/ Imam and Director of The Prayer Center of Orland Park
Fatwa (Islamic Advisory Opinion) Regarding the washing & shrouding of the deceased Muslims who pass away due to Coronavirus (Covid-19)

On behalf of the honorable, educated Muftis, scholars and Imams of mosques (215 scholars) from all over the UK and Europe (from the Indian Sub-Continent community) in a WhatsApp group, administered by Mufti Muhammad Faiz Rasool Naqshbandi Churahi.

_I seek protection from Allah against the rejected Shaytaan_
_Allah's name I commence with, the Most Kind, Most Merciful_

At this current time, the entire human race is facing a fatal danger in the form of Coronavirus, a pandemic that has affected each and every part of our economic, social and religious life. Prayers at the Holy Sites in Makka al-Mukarrama and al-Madina al-Munawarra have unfortunately been suspended. The doors of our mosques for Congregational and Jum’a prayers in the UK many other countries are closed. Perhaps one of the biggest concerns facing Muslims is the bathing (ghusl), burial and funeral rites of those Muslims who have unfortunately tasted martyrdom because of this disease.

Some medical experts - here and throughout the world - have advised that those who show symptoms of this virus must self-isolate (quarantine) along with their family for 14 days so that if anyone else in the family is also infected, it will become known within that time period.

If the infected person dies as a result of this disease and the rest of the family members are in self-isolation, if the body is not allowed to be ritually washed (ghusl) nor shown to the family and the kafan (shroud) is not allowed; in this situation, the funeral can be performed by a few people and there is no ghusl or kafan (which is Fardh Kifaya) – what does Islamic Shariah say?

Answer:

_First of all, we know that Coronavirus Covid-19 is a new disease and it is an unprecedented disaster. The researchers from different institutes send their findings to NHS and NHS deals the matter according to the situation in every area. The councils and corners deal the matter of deceased people with their local council policy. So this Fatwa is written with for the uncertain situation._

The washing (ghusl) and shrouding (kafan) are Fardh Kifaya (compulsory upon the Muslim community). If these are possible and permitted by the authority and the doctors, it should be done according to Shariah. If this is not possible and the body is sealed to prevent others from catching this contagious and life-threatening disease, then it is important to first clarify that such a person has died as a Shaheed (martyr). To speak ill or negatively of such a person is totally against the teachings of Islam, for martyrdom is a very exalted position in our religion.
Fatwa (Islamic Advisory Opinion) Regarding the washing & shrouding of the deceased Muslims who pass away due to Coronavirus (Covid-19)

If, according to medical experts, performing the rituals of ghusl and kafan pose a risk to the life of those performing it, then this condition is termed as bid’ah (under compulsion/special circumstances). Under bid’ah a forbidden act becomes allowed. It is normally forbidden to bury a Muslim without ghusl and kafan. However, in this situation, where a person has died from Covid-19, if the life of those performing ghusl/kafan is under threat (as confirmed from doctors, medical and legal advisors), then the ghusl and kafan is not compulsory. In its place, tayammum (without water over the sealed body) will be performed with the following intention:

“O Allah Almighty, we desired to perform the ghusl - however we cannot do due to life threatening exemptions, so please forgive us and accept our excuse.”

Tayammum can be performed over the sealed body or the coffin by wearing the appropriate dress as advised by the medical experts and local authority, in order to fulfill the command of Allah Almighty and to give peace to the family of deceased Muslim.

The funeral must be performed with a limited number of people, leaving a safe distance from the coffin and standing in the saff (row) spacious (as advised by the local authority). If there is more than one death, the prayer can be performed collectively.

In the case where a Muslim has been buried without the ghusl, kafan and Salah al-Janazah as a result of Covid-19, any Muslim can perform the Salah over the grave for up to three days after burial. It is important to note that if the family members of the deceased are in self-isolation and as a result are not participating in the Janazah, one must get permission from them before performing the Janazah.

According to our opinion, performing Salah al-Janazah in absentia (Ghaybana Janazah) is a special act, unique only to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). We are not able to do this, according to Hanafi school of thought. However, we can do Isaaal-e-Sawaab (good deeds on behalf of the deceased).

Once again, it must be reiterated that any Muslim who dies as a result of this illness is a martyr and thus, he/she should be remembered in the most positive of ways. Note: if the Ghusl is possible (allowed by authorities), then the Muslim community must arrange for this. The above Fatwa is only for special circumstances.

May Allah Almighty protect us all, Ameen
Fatwa written by
Hafiz Muhammad Faiz Rasool Naqshbandi Chuahi
(Mufti World Muslim Forum Britain)
Guidance For Burial & Funerals During The Coronavirus Pandemic
British Board of Scholars and Imams (BBSI)

1. The current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic will require a collective response from the Muslim community, working with health services and local authorities, to manage the volume of deaths.

2. There are certain mandatory funerary rites afforded to the Muslim deceased.

3. In such circumstances, the Divine law permits certain relaxations of these rites.

4. Families should be comforted that their loved ones receive the deaths of martyrs, and that any short comings in normal funerary rites will not affect this.

5. NHS and emergency workers (including funeral workers) should not forget their own physical and mental health, nor that of their families, in caring for others.

6. The risk of transmission of COVID-19 from a deceased body is low and should not be feared, provided adequate precautions are taken.

7. All such precautions must be taken by those handling the deceased’s body, whilst ensuring dignity is maintained. The needs of the living take priority over the needs of the deceased.

8. There are several options for ritual cleansing from: full ghusl, minimal ghusl, tayammum, wiping over the body bag. Each should be considered in sequence, but if none can be done, burial without ghusl is permissible.

9. The body bag may be considered to fulfil the role of the burial shroud (kafan).

10. Funeral (janaza) prayers should be performed by a minimum of people; alternatives include the absentee funeral prayer (salat al-gha’ib).

11. A number of options for burial can be considered, including shared graves, transferral to other sites, and delay in burial. Preparations should be made in advance, especially in areas with a large Muslim population. Cremation must be avoided at all costs.

12. The BBSI emphatically exhorts community organisations, mosques, and charities to mobilise the community so that they might get trained in funerary rites. Local communities are advised to take decisions on the basis of this guidance whilst factoring in local circumstances.

13. We are all returning to our Lord, and should pray for those who have passed away collectively and individually, remembering always the life to come.
1. Introduction

The BBSI is an apolitical national assembly of imams, traditional scholars and Islamically literate Muslim academics formed to facilitate scholarly intra-Muslim research and dialogue. Our aim is to provide authoritative ethico-theological guidance and leadership on matters relevant to Muslims, whilst promoting wider community welfare. It primarily seeks to do this by developing theological leadership that can authentically represent the rich scholarly inheritance of Islam, whilst responding flexibly to the context of modern times. Its ultimate aim is to both serve and represent the Muslim community in an ethical, inclusive, professional and scholar-led way. The BBSI especially takes seriously the responsibility to provide theologically grounded, practically focussed, holistic and - above all - cool-headed and far-sighted guidance to the community in times of generalised anxiety and panic.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, in consultation with community organisations, health and medical experts, the BBSI has been providing ethico-religious guidance to the community. With an increase in death rates inevitable due to COVID-19, Muslim communities in the UK are advised to work with their local authorities in assembling a volunteer group of individuals. These individuals must be (i) aware of Islamic burial rites, (ii) properly trained in the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and (iii) suitable to safely carry out the burial procedures.

This document provides guidance on the burial procedures: storing, collecting, transporting, washing (ghusl), prayer (salat al-janaza), and interring the body (dafan) to ensure that they accord with both Islamic and Public Health England (PHE) guidelines, taking into account the latitude of approaches in Islamic law and the principles of standard infection control precautions (SICPs) and transmission-based precautions (TBPs).

As with all BBSI guidance, it is directed primarily at imams, scholars and funeral workers, to help guide their decision-making processes, but equally is produced for the benefit of the general public. It should not be considered a religious verdict (fatwa), but rather comprises a comprehensive guidance that draws on the classical traditions of Islam to provide an overview of options available. We encourage those who read it to consult with their local scholars and utilize it to help their decision-making processes. We pray that it will be of benefit and consolation during this extremely difficult time for the British and international community.
2. The Significance of Funerary Rights

For Muslims, death is a transition between one stage of life and another. The act of burial marks this passage and carries profound meaning for the dead as well as the living. Burying the dead is a communal obligation upon Muslims and it is a means through which dignity and respect are afforded to our fellow humans who have departed onto the next stage of their existence.

Dignity

God has bestowed a special status upon all humans, granting them dignity of the highest form in their bodies and honoring them amongst the rest of creation. Muslims believe that their bodies are a gift (amana) from God and will be returned to God. They take care to treat their bodies with respect during their lives, and to respect the bodies of those who have died. The funerary rites are designed to respect and maintain the dignity of the human form.

Desecration, harm, mutilation, disfiguring

Muslims are prohibited from causing or allowing any harm or mutilation to the human body both during life or after death. The funerary rites, such as washing, shrouding and praying are performed in order to honour the deceased, and burial acts to protect them from future harm.

Body and soul as a composite for Muslims

The soul and body are inextricably connected from the womb of the mother to the womb of the grave and beyond. The human is understood as being a composite of body and soul, even after their physical separation at death. Hence Muslims do not distinguish between the bodies of the living or the dead, in that both are afforded the highest levels of respect and care. There is a deep metaphysical commitment that the soul is still aware of and able to experience what the physical body undergoes after death. Prophetic traditions further state that the dead can hear the greetings of those who visit them at their graves. Muslims are thus obliged to treat the dead with gentleness and care.

Rights of the dead

One of the rights that Muslims have over each other is that of funerary rites. It is a collective obligation on the living to wash, shroud, pray over and bury the dead, through respectful completion of the necessary rites and rituals as described in the primary sources of scripture and elaborated upon in the classical schools of law. These form part of a continuous tradition in Islam and carries deep religious, spiritual, historical and cultural significance for Muslims. These rituals may remind the wider public of other faith traditions who have similar beliefs around our final gifts to those who have passed. Alternatives to burial are unacceptable in Islam.
3. Counsel to the Bereaved

As a community, we are going through very difficult times. The death of a loved one is never easy. Despite the comfort of knowing that they are returning to their Lord in accordance with His divine Decree, grief at one’s loss is a perfectly normal response. This is even more the case in our current circumstance, where we may lose community members in large numbers. We may not also have the opportunity to bid them farewell in the traditional manner, due to fear of transmitting the virus, or adhering appropriately to government guidelines around isolating and lockdown.

Nonetheless, we take solace from the words of the Prophet (s) when he said: ‘The one who dies in a plague … dies as a martyr in the path of God.’ (Al-Bukhari, Muslim). In every distress we go through there is a divine blessing and wisdom. This narration indicates that the one who dies from an infectious disease receives the reward of a martyr, which is a tremendous rank. By scholarly agreement, such people are still afforded all the funerary rites, but families may be concerned about those rites not being performed properly during this very difficult period. There is a lot of confusion around what can and cannot be done, and also what might happen to the deceased if the funerary rites are not fully performed. This is understandable given the situation; however, we assure you that the Islamic tradition makes it abundantly clear that the souls of your loved ones will suffer no ill effects from any shortfall in this regard arising out of these circumstances.

Furthermore, the tradition is clear that in such situations the community is not considered to be held accountable for what is beyond their ability to manage. Rest assured: our and your prayers reach the Lord who hears all and answers every supplicant who calls unto Him. We beseech Him for His mercy and pray in this time, as in all times, for His Grace and Beneficence.

4. Counsel to Health Professionals and Chaplains

The BBSI recognises and tremendously appreciates the tireless and selfless work that all of our NHS workers - from medics to cleaners - are doing to keep us all safe and healthy. We want you to know that our membership is supplicating for all of you; praying that God rewards you with the best of rewards for this noble service you are engaged in; beseeching Him to keep you and your families safe. It should be noted that, notwithstanding the various narrations about avoiding places of contagion, we know that the Prophet (upon whom be blessings and peace) treated a leper by placing his blessed hand in the same bowl as that of the afflicted (Al-Tirmidhi). Please, therefore, be aware that what you are doing is fulfilling a specific sunna as well as the general Sunna of assisting those in need. We pray that this work be a means for you to be drawn nearer to Him, in accordance with His Wisdom. We would also advise you to take all precautions necessary to keep yourselves and your families safe during this very difficult period, especially if you have elderly parents, in which case you should consider quarantining yourself from them as far as possible. Given the lockdown measures currently in place, it may well be that those who pass away from COVID-19 will do so alone, in a hospital bed, not surrounded by family or loved ones.
Whatever your field but especially if you have access to such patients in their last stages, you are their family. Please take a little time, if possible, to minister to their spiritual needs at this critical stage of end of life. If possible, and if safe to do so:

- Comfort them and counsel them to hope in God’s mercy and turn to Him, seeking His pardon, for they are returning to their Lord as martyrs, beloved in His presence
- Encourage them gently to recite the shahada and occupy their time in:
  - Prayer (in the hospital bed, in any direction, with any slight head movement)
  - Vocal remembrance (if possible given their breathing difficulties) or
  - Silent dhikr (of the mind or heart, with a tasbih/sibha if that helps).
- For those in their very last stages, recite the shahada without encouraging or exhorting them to do so, and if you are able, recite Surah Yasin to ease their passing
- Tayammum: It may be that, as the rate of death increases, funeral services will be overwhelmed and ghul will not be performed for the deceased. Only if it is possible:
  - Keep a small, clean stone (about palm size ideally) with you.
  - Once the patient has passed away, make the intention of tayammum.
  - Rub your gloved hands on the stone and pass once over their face,
  - Then rub again and pass over their forearms. Make sure to discard the gloves and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
  - This will fulfill the responsibility of ghul of the deceased if it is impossible for it to be done later on, and will be a means of you single-handedly lifting the burden of this responsibility from the community.

Lastly, the BBSI recognises that this period is going to be emotionally and psychologically very difficult for all those working on the front line of dealing with this crisis. It may be that you are transferred out of your comfort zone, need to work additional hours to cover unwell or isolating colleagues, and be confronted with a significant amount of death. This can be extremely stressful for anyone, even healthcare professionals who often feel that they should be able to deal with such situations. We have a number of doctors in the BBSI, and can assure you that nothing equips you for the experience of disaster medicine.

If you find yourself nearing breaking point, please reach out to services that are available, whether psychological or spiritual, and seek help. We will work with other organisations to try and ensure that this service is available to you, and assist you in whatever way we can, with our prayers if nothing else.
5. Fulfilling the Rights of the Deceased

There are general rights that the deceased have over the living: to pray for their forgiveness and acceptance; fulfilling their wishes and bequests as laid out in their wills; performing acts of worship, such as recitation of the Qur’an and asking God for the reward to be granted to them; and doing acts of lasting charity on their behalf.

There are also specific rights that the deceased have over the living, which are communal obligations. These largely revolve around the funerary rites, and which this guidance details. There are several stages of interring the deceased’s body, each of which will be explained in detail: (1) storage, collection and transportation, (2) ritual cleansing (ghusl), (3) shrouding (kafan), (4) performance of the funeral prayer (janaza), and (5) burial of the deceased.

The BBSI emphatically exhorts community organisations, mosques, and charities to mobilise the community so that they might get trained in funerary rites. There are several online resources available for this.

The BBSI recognises the very courageous work being done by funeral workers, who will largely be on the front line of dealing with the deceased. We also understand that you have a great deal of anxiety about handling the bodies and the risks of contracting COVID-19 yourself. There is a lot of uncertainty about this issue in the public, though top health experts and medical professionals have officially assured us that there is little to fear provided adequate PPE is utilised. This guidance takes as its priority the safety and health of those entrusted to perform the funerary rights of the deceased, and we ask Allah to reward you tremendously for the service you are providing; you are as those who guard the frontiers of the land from attack. For these specific funerary rites, given the still-contagious nature of the virus and the possibility of contracting it from the body of the deceased, we strongly advise that there are those who should not be involved. This excludes presence at the funeral prayer and the site of the burial itself.

Exclusion criteria:

There are certain categories of people who should avoid performing any of the funerary rites with the exception of the funeral prayer.

• Anyone elderly (over 60)
• Anyone with an underlying health condition (See Appendix A).
• Those who are in frequent contact with the above mentioned individuals
• Those who have not been properly instructed in the risks of dealing with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive bodies
• Those who have not received basic training in dealing with infectious bodies, which includes methods of handling the deceased, safe working procedures, donning and removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), personal hygiene, and steps to be taken if something goes wrong.
It is very important, and possibly obligatory, under Islamic law for those vulnerable to the virus to act so as to avoid contracting it, especially in the situation where others are able to fulfil the rights of the deceased. We recognise that family members, under normal circumstances, play a leading role in these funerary rites, which also allow us to process our grief. However, the circumstance of the pandemic is different: it is a religious principle that one must avoid exposing oneself to, and exposing others to harm (la darar wa la dirar).

**Collecting & Transferring the Deceased**

- It is of utmost importance to treat the deceased with dignity and care at all times.
- The burial team should be the minimum number of people required to carry out the task safely and effectively. They should gather all appropriate information regarding the deceased prior to collection, his/her condition, potential infection risks, and any other information relevant to those who will be handling the body.
- A hazard notification sheet is often provided detailing this information. It should be read and consulted carefully. Due to the sensitive nature of the information contained in the hazard notification sheet, it should only be shared with those who require information to safely handle the deceased. Burial teams should wherever applicable take the duty of confidentiality seriously.
- To minimize risk, the deceased may be placed in a body bag during collection and transfer. Individuals should avoid directly touching the deceased and minimize moving the body.
- At the time of writing this guidance, Public Health England (PHE) has NOT mandated the use of body bags for COVID-19 victims, though it is standard practice in some hospitals for all the deceased during this pandemic.
- The BBSI recommends precaution and strongly advises burial teams to consult the medical personnel on call regarding the use of body bags if the deceased is not already placed in one.
- In cases of likely risk of bodily leakage or delays leading to bodily decay, a body bag MUST be used.
- During collection and transfer, individuals should abstain from activities that increase the risk of contracting the virus. They should:
  - Not bring their hands into contact with their mouth, nose, or eyes
  - Cover all abrasions and cuts, especially on the hands, with waterproof dressings,
  - Have available disinfectant material;
  - Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
  - PPE equipment includes: gloves, eye protection, face masks, waterproof gowns and sleeves, and, in some cases, respiratory protective equipment (RPE).
  - Equipment should be stored properly, fit for purpose, worn properly, correctly fitted, and disposed of after use.
- Individuals should be trained in the donning and removal of such equipment.
- Burial teams should pay attention to the equipment they use. They should have dedicated equipment (vehicles, trolleys, etc.) for use with infected bodies. Equipment used should be of a type easy to decontaminate and disinfect.
- Equipment that has come into contact with the deceased should be disinfected regularly and after every use, such that the vehicle, tables or stretchers, surfaces and reusable PPE. Single-use items should be discarded safely and immediately after first use.
- After collecting and transferring the deceased, members of the burial team should: remove any protective clothing; dispose of such clothing safely; and wash their hands with soap thoroughly.
Washing (ghusl)

1. Who should perform the washing?
Washing of the deceased is a part of the Islamic ritual of honouring the deceased and a communal obligation on the Muslim community. Although this would ordinarily start with the family members, in this context those properly trained in PPE and with access to the appropriate equipment would need to take the lead. Minimally, two people of the same sex as the deceased should be available for the washing, though more would ordinarily be required. Those selected to carry out the ritual cleansing should be from the ‘safe list’ noted above. Importantly, they should be aware of the Islamic rules on washing the deceased. Those on the exclusion list should not participate in the cleansing of the body.

2. What is the procedure for washing the COVID-suspected deceased?
Provided the funeral washers take precautions, washing the COVID-suspected deceased is safe. As of the writing of this guidance, it should be noted that Public Health England has NOT made it a requirement for the COVID-suspected deceased to be sealed in a body bag and have deemed hygienic preparations and even post-mortem to be permitted for those positively diagnosed with COVID-19. This is in line with their guidance for infectious diseases in general; it should be noted that COVID-19 is less infectious from deceased bodies than HIV, SARS, and Ebola, as well as other such similar serious diseases. The concern with COVID-19 is the likely volume and rate of funerals that will be required. Family and washers should be assured that all of the following guidance is both safe and in accordance with Islamic law. A COVID-suspected body may be received from the morgue in one of two circumstances: with or without a ‘DO NOT OPEN’ tag.
1. In the case of a DO NOT OPEN tag, those performing the cleansing rite should don PPE and wipe over the sealed body bag from head to toe, after having applied some water to their gloved hands.
2. In the case where there is NO ‘do not open’ tag, and in light of PHE guidelines, it is possible for the deceased to be given a minimal washing with the following conditions:
a. that those washing the body wear all the appropriate PPE and are properly trained in its donning/removal,
b. that all reasonable means are taken to minimize risk of transmission, such as avoiding procedures that are aerosol-generating (like moving the body around),
c. that the deceased does not suffer from any other condition that creates a significantly higher-risk of transmitting disease, and
d. that those in charge of burial are able to provide a safe and dedicated space for washing that is properly disinfected/decontaminated after every washing procedure.
3. The minimal washing consists of:
a. Minimal movement of the deceased’s body
b. Avoiding removing the disinfectant covering from the face
c. Pouring water over the deceased’s body from neck down
d. Flowing hair may be washed or wiped
e. Avoiding performance of istinja or pressing the abdomen to extrude contents
4. If any of the steps above cannot be safely undertaken, including not having access to adequate PPE, then the option to wipe over the body bag should be utilised.
5. If one is either (1) advised by morgue staff that the risk of infection is extremely high, or (2) the rate of death - as a last resort - the deceased can be buried without either ghusl or wiping.

Shrouding (Kafan/Takfin)
Ordinarily, shrouding is carried out immediately after ghusl, and it is recommended to use three white sheets (cotton or partly synthetic) for men and five for women. This is unlikely to be possible for a COVID-suspected deceased. In this case, the BBSI affirms that the body bag will fulfill the religious requirement of shrouding. An additional shroud may be wrapped over the body bag, though this is not required, and the body then placed in the casket. The outer part of the casket should be wiped with the appropriate disinfectant as part of transfer procedures.

Funeral Prayer (Janaza)

Who should pray and where?
The ideal in our tradition is that there be a large gathering of people, including family members, to pray over the deceased following the ritual washing (ghusl) of the body. However, the communal obligation is also fulfilled even if only one Muslim (male or female) prays over the deceased. It is envisaged that there may well be significant restrictions on gatherings, and that mosques may be closed for some time to come. In such a case, the funeral prayer may be performed in the cemetery, even though this is not ideal. The options are as follows:
1. Group performance of the janaza prayer with the family, whilst maintaining appropriate social distancing strategies, at the cemetery prior to burial.
2. Performance of the janaza prayer by a very small number of individuals (such as the washers), in the presence of the deceased’s body. One individual praying over the deceased fulfils the community obligation (fard kifaya).
3. Performance of the funeral prayer in absentia (salat al-janaza ‘ala al-gha’ibin) by other family members and well-wishers, which is valid in the Shafi’i and Hanbali schools of law. [This does not remove the communal obligation mentioned in (2) above - at least one person should fulfil that, if possible.] Hanafis and Malikis should consult their local scholars about following this option.

Muslims should always be aware that actions are in accordance with their intentions, and that ‘one who intends a virtuous deed but does not perform it is like one who performed it.’ If you would have gone to the funeral had you been able to do so, but were unable owing to your health, the need to socially isolate or community lockdown, you will be rewarded as though you had gone.
Burying the Deceased

1. Who should not perform the burial?
The burial may be attended by anyone, bearing in mind government guidelines about social distancing and community lockdown. The actual burial of the COVID-suspected deceased’s body should not be performed by those on the exclusion list, as noted previously.

2. Where is the deceased to be buried?
In the shari’a, the minimal burial is for a body to be placed in the earth in such a manner where:
• The living are protected from the effects of bodily decay, such as the smell of the body
• The deceased’s body is protected from mutilation or damage, such as by animals.

The basis is that a Muslim is buried:
• in a Muslim graveyard, or the section demarcated for Muslims within cemetery grounds,
• in his/her own individual grave,
• without transferring the body an excessive distance from one area to another, and
• without an undue delay.

The COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented. Given the higher rates of deaths occurring from this illness, Muslim communities will be forced to make decisions regarding burial procedures that are non-ideal. It should be noted, however, that classical jurists have given significant scope to depart from the ideal funerary rites in cases of need and necessity. Below, we provide guidance on a few issues pertaining to burials that will likely be pertinent to Muslim communities in the coming weeks.

Mass Burials:
• A Muslim’s body should ideally be buried in his/her individual grave.
• In times of general need (defined as any situation in which burying bodies individually in their own separate graves creates undue difficulty or harm), the shariah explicitly permits burial of multiple bodies in the same grave.

For a mass burial, it is ideal that:
• Men are buried in one shared grave and women in another, or, if they are placed in a single shared grave, men to one side and women to the other. If this is difficult, it is permitted to bury them in one grave intermixed.
• It is advised that each body be separated from the other with a barrier, even a small one formed with dirt, whenever possible without undue difficulty.
• Muslims are buried together in their own cemetery, or, if not possible, in a grave separate to those from other faith traditions.
• Burying the deceased in a shared grave is preferable to an excessive delay in burying them in their own grave. See further related points in ‘Burial in a non-Muslim cemetery’ and ‘Delaying Burial’.
• Muslims should ideally be buried in a Muslim cemetery.
• If this is not possible for a valid reason such as lack of space, it would be permitted to bury a Muslim in a non-Muslim cemetery
• When possible, a shared grave in a Muslim cemetery is to be given preference over an individual grave in a non-Muslim one. See related points below in ‘Transferring the Body’ and ‘Delaying Burial’.

Transferring the Body
• It is permitted to transfer the deceased in cases of need or for a valid purpose, such as lack of space or capacity locally, or a bequest to be buried in one’s hometown.
• Decisions to transfer the body should be made in close consultation with the family of the deceased, relevant authorities, and the communities/sites to whom/where the deceased will be transferred to.
• When possible, transferring the body for burial without delay, even a long distance, is preferable to an excessive delay.
• When possible, transferring the deceased to a Muslim cemetery, even if a long distance, is to be given preference over a nearby burial in a non-Muslim cemetery.
(d) Delaying Burial
• The default is to carry out the burial procedure as quickly as possible.
• Slight delays are permitted if there is need, such as when the burial team is seeing to the funerary rites of others or when waiting for a space to be allocated for the deceased in a Muslim cemetery.
• When possible, a slight delay to ensure burial in a Muslim cemetery is to be given preference over an immediate burial in a non-Muslim cemetery provided the deceased can be safely stored.
• Excessive delays should be absolutely avoided.
• It is preferable to transfer the deceased elsewhere, or bury him in a shared Muslim grave, than to excessively delay funerary rites and burial. This is a matter that requires sensitive consultation with the family of the deceased.
• In cases where there are no other options and it is not possible to bury without delay, it would be permitted to delay the burial and other funerary rites. The deceased in this case should be kept stored in a manner that prevents bodily decay, is safe, and upholds their dignity. For this, the relevant authorities and experts should be consulted and communities should anticipate and plan for scenarios where this will be likely.

How is the COVID-suspected deceased to be buried?
• The burial and any activities associated with it should proceed as normal, but it should be restricted to the gravesite.
• Before transfer to the gravesite, the outside of the casket should be disinfected. Individuals tasked with carrying the casket to and from the transport vehicle should don the appropriate PPE, such as suitable single-use gloves. They should dispose of this equipment after first use and thoroughly wash their hands with water and soap or hand sanitizer.
• While transporting the deceased, it is recommended to engage in dhikr and supplication for the deceased.
• The funeral should be attended by a minimal number of people given current government guidance.
• Some councils have set limits on the maximum number of people that may attend a funeral. As such, those arranging the funeral should consult their relevant local authorities regarding this.
• If there is no set maximum set by the government or local authorities but only a general instruction to keep funerals small, it is recommended to follow the guidance of the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG), which has advised that funerals only be attended by immediate family or a few individuals.
• It may give some solace to those unable to physically attend the actual burial to have it live-streamed, though one cannot actually join the funeral prayer via livestream. For those who wish, the absentia funeral prayer remains an option.
• Attendees should be told to observe all social distancing, self-isolation, and personal hygiene guidelines advised by the government.
• This means that for the time being the elderly, those with underlying health conditions, and those required to observe 14-day self isolation should not come to the funeral site, especially if the service will be attended by several people.
• The BBSI understands that this will be extremely difficult for people who were close to the deceased, but wish to reassure them that true proximity is when hearts are entwined, not merely proximity of bodies.
• Viewing of the deceased before burial is permitted, including the face provided this is medically permitted, as the risk of infection is very low.
• However, the deceased should under no circumstances be touched or kissed.
• See the Royal College of Pathologists advice for this (PPE, social distancing).
• The deceased should be lowered into the grave as normally done in funeral services.
• It is recommended by many jurists that the deceased be given an admonitory address (talqin) after burial, which may be expressed in any manner that conveys a meaning similar to what is related below:
• Remember the covenant by which you exited this world; the testification that there is no god but God who has no partners and that Muhammad is the messenger and slave of God. Remember that the Day of Judgment is coming and that God resurrects those in the graves. Say: ‘I have accepted that my Lord is God, that Islam is my religion, that Muhammad is a true Prophet, that the Ka`bah is the true direction for prayer, that the Qur’an is my guide and that all believers in God are brothers.’
• It is recommended to recite some Quran over the grave after burial and make a supplication for the forgiveness of the deceased.
Word of Counsel

May God be praised – He is the Maker of the heavens and of the earth; the Creator of all things, and the One who sent His Chosen Messenger, our liege-lord, Muhammad, the most noble of all creation. God is the Eminent, the Forgiving, the Manager of all affairs, the Maker of destinies; who has brought all His creation into being, and makes it thus they change from state to state, and moves from one abode to the next.

God has established that we have not one life, nor even two – but five ‘lives’, in that there are five abodes of existences that we pass through. We all too often forget that, and we are tempted to think that the life of this world, al-dunya, is the life, the only life, when, in fact, it is the most passing and fleeting of all.

Rather, by God’s Mercy and His Grace, we have already lived through the abode of the life before this one, where all the souls were gathered, and we all took the covenant with our Lord, recognising His Unity and his Lordship. And from among those souls include the community of Muhammad – the community that you come from. Wahb ibn Munabbih narrates that when our liege-lord Moses asked his Lord about the community of Muhammad, God replied: “It is the community of Ahmad (another name for Muhammad), whose people are content with whatever little provision I give them, and I am content with whatever little good works they do. I make each one of them enter the Garden by their testimony that ‘there is no god but God’.”

And then we go through this world that we are in; and then we shall be placed in our graves; and then we leave our graves for the Resurrection and Gathering, until the moment that all of us reach our final abode. Remember of that time in the Gathering that our Prophet (s) declared: “Each Prophet has one prayer which must be answered. They have prayed, but I have concealed my prayer, so that it may be an intercession for my nation, including, God willing, all those who died without partnering anything to God.”

That intercession is for the life to come; that life that is spoken of in the Qur’an (44:51-7) as: “Those who had taqwa will be in a secure place, in gardens and watersprings … a favour from your Lord: that is the supreme triumph.”

The Prophet (s) noted to us: “the Garden comprises one hundred degrees; between each two degrees is like between Heaven and earth. Firdaus is the high degree, from which spring the four rivers of the Garden. Above it is the Highest Throne. When you petition God, therefore, ask for Firdaus!” and, “A herald shall announce: ‘O people of the Garden! It is time for you to be healthy and never fall ill. It is time for you to live and never die. It is time for you to be young and never grow old. And it is time for you to be happy and never be miserable.’”

May God make us all of its people, through His Generosity, His Grace, His Mercy, and Grace.
Performing the Funeral Prayer

**Hanafi method**
1. The janaza prayer is fard kifaya (communal obligation) - it is fulfilled by a minimum of one (1) person.
2. It is sunna for the imam to stand in front of the chest of the deceased.
3. The necessary components of the prayer are the 4 takbirs and standing up.
4. It is sunna to read the thana after the 1st takbir, salutations on the Prophet after the 2nd takbir, dua for the deceased after the 3rd and it is wajib to do the salam after the 4th takbir.
5. The hands should only be raised for the 1st takbir.
6. Sura al-Fatiha can be prayed after the thana with the intention of dua’ and not qira’at.
7. Supplicating for forgiveness is not required for a child or an insane person; on the contrary the dua should be made that the children are a source of salvation for us.

**Shafi’i Method**
The funeral prayer (salat al-janaza) is a communal obligation, requiring a minimum of 1 person to pray it. For those that are unable to attend the salat al-janaza in person, they may pray the absentee funeral prayer (salat al-gha’ib). The following will apply:
1. The body of the deceased should be placed between the imam and the qibla, with the head to the right and the feet to the left. The imam should preferably be in front of the head of the body, if the body is a man, or to the midpoint of the body, if the body is a woman. (This condition does not exist for those praying salat al-gha’ib).
2. One stands, intending to pray an obligatory funeral prayer, with the intention occurring at the time of the opening takbir. (For those praying salat al-gha’ib, they intend to pray a sunna prayer that is salat al-gha’ib.)
3. The opening takbir (Allahu akbar) is then followed by the reciting of surah al-Fatiha (quietly, to one’s self);
4. Then this is followed by a second takbir, which is then followed by quietly saying ‘alhamdulillah; and then (quietly, to one’s self) recitation of the prayer upon the Prophet, upon whom be blessings and peace, in the same way that one would do so in the second half of the tashhahud in the ritual daily prayer;
5. Which is then followed by a third takbir; which is then followed by (quietly, to one’s self) supplicating for the deceased. It is recommended one says, “Allahumma la tahrinma ajrahu wa la taftina ba-dahu wa-ghfir lana wa lahu” (“O God, do not deprive us of his reward, nor afflict us after him. [O God,] grant us and him forgiveness.”)
6. Which is then followed by a fourth takbir; which is then followed by (quietly, to one’s self) praying for all the Muslims;
7. Which is then followed by saying aloud ‘as-salam ‘alaykum’ to the right, and then to the left.
Funeral Services (Muslim Community Center MCC)

According to the Muslim Community Center Janazah and funeral services will be limited to a maximum of 10 immediate family members to enter Masjid with no more than 2 individuals allowed to assist in ghusl. The cemetery also will limit 10 people to gather for tadfeen. In addition most paperwork and payment will be handled online.

“Verily, we belong to God and we will surely return to Allah.” (Qur'an 2:156) Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah (swt). Our lives, our possessions and our families are Allah's gifts to us. These are trusts of Allah (swt) given to us in this world. Allah with His mercy allows us to benefit from these trusts for a pre-determined period of time. Allah (swt) with His wisdom takes away these trusts as He sees appropriate. Allah (swt) knows and we know not. Death is the surest event that occurs in every human's life. Death is inevitable and unpredictable. Nobody knows when death will come to him or her. The Muslim Community Center (MCC) foresaw the need for a cemetery to bury the deceased according to Islamic rulings. MCC acquired a piece of land from Rosehill Cemetery conveniently located on the north side of Chicago in 1989. Additional land was acquired in Bohemian National Cemetery, also at a very short distance from the MCC building on Elston Avenue in Chicago. All the graves face the Qiblah. MCC provides assistance with all funeral services. Here we provide you information for peacefully completing the burial of your deceased loved one.

From The Deathbed To The Grave

- Services of a funeral director consist of getting the body released, wherever the body may be, and transporting it from the place of death to the funeral facility while abiding by the regulations and preparing the body for burial.

- The funeral prep-room is where the body is washed, shrouded and placed in a coffin for burial after Salat-al-Janazah (funeral prayer). MCC has a funeral prep-room within the premises of our building at 4380 N. Elston Avenue in Chicago.

- The Rosehill and Bohemian cemeteries are the locations for Muslim burials. Grave opening and closing services and a concrete liner are provided. MCC has pre-purchased graves and concrete liners for the burial.

- MCC has gravestones available for the burials at Rosehill Cemetery. For Bohemian, you would have to directly go to the cemetery.
Whom To Contact In Case Of Death

**THE POLICE: 911** if sudden death. If natural death, call the nurse.

**FUNERAL DIRECTOR:** Mufti Haroon Firdausi, Licensed Funeral Director of Muslim Funeral Services: http://www.muslimfuneralservices.com/ Phone: 815-549-9400, or haroon@muslimfuneralservices.com

**MCC CEMETERY COMMITTEE:**
M. Saif Mazhar: 773-816-8845  
Yusuf Umar: 773-725-9047  
Rashed Ali Khan: 773-386-8181

**BOHEMIAN NATIONAL CEMETERY OR ROSEHILL CEMETERY:** After getting the grave number from MCC Cemetery Committee, you need to visit the Bohemian Cemetery to make a payment for opening and closing services, and to also sign all necessary papers by a family member of the deceased and to schedule the burial. The Bohemian National Cemetery office is located at:
5255 N Pulaski Road,  
Chicago, Illinois 60630  
Phone: (773) 539-8442

For information regarding casket prices, forms and all funeral services related information can be found at http://www.muslimfuneralservices.com/

**Immediately After Death**

- Soon after the death the body becomes cold and loses its flexibility. Therefore, you need to take a few steps to position the body correctly for burial.
- Turn the face towards the right.
- Place hands (laid out straight) on the sides.
- Close the mouth. If necessary, tie a piece of cloth around the chin and head to keep the mouth closed.
- Keep the feet together. If necessary, tie the two big toes together with a string.
- Remind the doctor to sign the death certificate.
- It is highly recommended that the burial take place as soon as possible after the death.
CHAPTER 7: Washing

Alhamdulillah, MCC has a funeral Preparation room within the MCC building at 4380 N. Elston Avenue, Chicago. The facility provides a dignified and convenient place for preparing bodies for burial, according to Islamic sharia requirements. The Facility consists of a body-washing table, a table to enshroud the body (kafan), and three refrigerated storage units for temporarily storing bodies. The facility is designed and built to meet the applicable city code requirements. Its closeness to the Masjid provides added convenience to the family of the deceased and soothing environment. STEPS OF WASHING: Privacy for the deceased is a crucial and important requirement at all times during the ghusl.

STEPS OF WASHING

• The body of the deceased should be placed on a table or alike, the deceased’s clothes should be removed, and the body should be covered with a sheet of cloth at all times during the ghusl.
• The Auwra (private parts) of the deceased should be covered with a sheet of cloth (The Auwra of a male is from the naval to the knee in the presence of males, for the female it is the same in the presence of females).
• The head and the upper body should be raised slightly to insure the washing water with exudations from the body flows down and does not run back to the body.
• Remove any items or objects not already removed. These include watches, hospital or mortuary ID tags, wound dressings, IV lines, peg tubes, artificial limbs. If there is any active bleeding or wound discharge then that may be padded and dressed.
• The washer should start washing by saying: “Bismillah” (In the name of Allah)
• The washer wears gloves or wraps a piece of cloth around his hand, and with this he cleans away any impurities from the body using water. Then he should dispose of the gloves.
• The washer should take another pair of gloves, press lightly on the stomach of the deceased to expel, if possible, any remnants from it, and then wash the body of all impurities using water. Then he should dispose of the gloves.
• The washer should take another pair of gloves, and wash the covered private parts, then dispose of the gloves. The washer should perform wudhu (ablution) for the deceased without inserting the water in the nose and in the mouth. May use a piece of wet cotton wool in a small roll to clean nose and front teeth.
• The washer should clean the body with water and soap (if available), starting from the head (hair, face and beard in men), then the upper right side of the body then the left side, after that the lower right side then the lower left.
• In the case of a female, her hair should be loosened, washed, combed, and be braided in three braids, and placed behind her back.
• The washing should be done three times, or five times, or seven times, as needed, providing that after washing the head, wash the right side before the left, and the upper parts before the lower ones.
• In the last wash, the washer may use camphor, or some perfume with the water.
• After that the body should be dried with a clean towel.
• Then the body should be covered with a clean sheet. The auwra must be kept covered at all times.
• Get ready to start the shrouding.
CHAPTER 7: AL-KAFAN (SHROUDING THE DEAD MUSLIM)

Shrouding should start immediately after washing and drying the body of the deceased. It is recommended to use white sheets from inexpensive material. Extravagance is not recommended in the Kafan (Shroud). All measurements may vary depending on the stature of the deceased. The material of the sheet should not have any stitching, not be silk, nor should any gold be used. We have a roll of fabric available should you need to cut a specific size. THE KAFAN OF A MALE: The Kafan of a male should consist of three white wrapping sheets, and 4 tie ropes

- Outer sheet – Lifafah
- Second sheet – Izaar
- Third sheet – Qamees (shirt)
- 3-4 ties
- 2 smaller sheets (satar) used cover the private parts (auwra) one before and the other after ghusl

STEPS OF SHROUDING:

• The wrapping sheets should be opened and spread out one on the top of the other. Roll up the front half of the top sheet towards the head – Qamees (shirt)
• The deceased, covered with a sheet (satar), is lifted and laid on his back on this top sheet(Qamees)
• The Qamees is then unrolled over the front of the body and once the body is covered then remove the satar (covering sheet)
• Some scent or perfume or sandal wood paste may be put on those parts of the body upon which one rests during prostration, that is the forehead, nose, hands, knees, and feet.
• If it is possible the deceased’s left hand should be placed on his chest, then put his right hand on the left hand like the way in the Salat (Prayer)
• The edge of the next sheet (Izaar) is then folded over the deceased right side, then the other edge over his left side.
• Then the last sheet (Lifafah) should be folded the same way.
• These sheets should be fastened with a piece of cloth (tie ropes), one above the head, another under the feet, and two around the body
• This completes the shrouding for the male.

THE KAFAN OF A FEMALE:

The Kafan of a female should consist of five white garments and 4 ties.

- Outermost sheet – Lifafah
- Second sheet – Sinaband – to cover from under armpits to thights
- Third sheet – Izaar
- Fourth layer – Qamees
- Last piece – Orni – to cover head and hair
- 3-4 ties
- 2 smaller sheets (satar) used cover the private parts one before and the other after ghusl
CHAPTER 7: SALAT-AL-JANAZA (FUNERAL PRAYER)

Salat al-Janaza, is the prayer for the forgiveness of the deceased, it is offered in a Masjid generally after a congregational prayer at MCC. It will make it convenient to prepare the body in the premises where the Masjid is located. The family and friends should be invited to participate in the prayer along with other Muslims who attend daily prayers. The Imam will go over the procedure of the prayer. The MCC Imam will be designated for all prayers conducted at MCC (No Exceptions). Typically the Janazah Salah is immediately prayed after the Zuhr prayer or Sunnah prayers.

STEPS OF SALATUL JANAZAH:

*Muslims should form a minimum of three lines facing the Qiblah. If there is only one Muslim with the Imam, he should stand behind the Imam. The body should be placed in front of the person who leads the prayer. In case there are more than one deceased (males and females), then the female should be placed in the first row in the direction of the Qiblah, then the male in the following row, then the Imam. For example: If there are: a dead Muslim male, a female, a young girl, and a young boy, then behind the Qiblah, first place the body of the young girl, then the adult female, then the young boy, then the adult male, so the bodies are arranged in a way that female bodies are first, then the males The Imam should stand by the middle of a female body, and by the head for a male body, this is due to the Hadith in which Anas related that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) leading Salatul Janazah for a dead male, the Prophet (PBUH) stood in front of the deceased head, and for a dead female, the Prophet (PBUH) stood in front of the middle of her body. (Authentic-Abu Dawood). In another Hadith Samura ben Jundub said when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made Salatul Janazah for a dead Muslim female, he stood in front of her waist (Muslim). There is no Ruku, Sujud, Adhan, or Iqahma.*

- Having the appropriate neyah (Intention), raise your hands in the usual manner:
- Say “Allahu Akbar”(Allah is the Greatest)
- Fold your right hand over the left hand in the usual manner
- Recite the Thana or Surah Fatiha silently
- Then say: “Allahu Akbar”(Allah is the Greatest)
- Then recite the Durood-e-Ibrahim: ALLAHUMMA SALLI ALA MUHAMMADIW WA ALA AALI MUHAMMADIN KAMAA SALLAITA ALA IBRAHIMA WA ALA AALI IBRAHIMA INNAKA HAMIDUM MAJID. ALLAHUMMA BAARIK ALA MUHAMMADIW WA ALA AALI MUHAMMADIN KAMAA BAARAK TA ALA IBRAHIMA WA ALA AALI IBRAHIMA INNAKA HAMIDUM MAJID. “O Allah, let Your Blessings come upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as you have blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as you have blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious”.
- Then say: “Allahu Akbar”(Allah is the Greatest)

Continued on the next page...
• Then make dua’ (Supplicate) for the deceased. Allaahum-maghfir lihayyinaa, wa mayyitinaa, wa shaaheidinaa, wa ghaa’ibinnaa, wa sagheerinaa wa kabeerinaa, wa thakarinaa wa ‘unthaanaa. Allaah humma man’ahyaytahu minnaa fa’ahyihi’alal-‘Isaami, wa man tawaffaytahu minnaa fatawaffahu ‘alal-‘eeamaani, Allaahumma laa tahrimnaa ‘ajrahu wa laa tudhillanaa ba’dahu.

“O Allah forgive our living and our dead, those who are with us and those who are absent, our young and our old, our menfolk and our womenfolk. O Allah, whomever you give life from among us give him life in Islam, and whomever you take away from us take him away in Faith. O Allah, do not forbid us their reward and do not send us astray after them.

• Then say: “Allahu Akbar” (Allah is the Greatest) and make any Dua
• The Imam will then make Tasleem from right to left and this will conclude the Janazah salah.

THE PROHIBITED TIMES OF SALATUL JANAZAH:

- From sunrise until the sun is fully risen
- At the zenith of the sun (the sun at meridian), until it passes the meridian
- From when the sun pales before sunset until it has set.
Recommended Guidance for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Funeral Homes (CDC)

I. Background

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus that has emerged and caused coronavirus disease (abbreviated as COVID-19). Public health experts continue to learn about SARS-CoV-2, but based on current data and similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (those within about six feet) via respiratory droplets.

Transmission of SAR-CoV-2 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented yet, but current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of material. One primary measure discussed in this guidance will be cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection – a best practice for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in funeral homes and other locations.

II. Purpose

This guidance provides recommendations for funeral homes in Illinois.

III. Preventative Actions for Funeral Homes Directors

According to the CDC, there is currently no known risk associated with being in the same room at a funeral or visitation service with the body of someone who died of COVID-19. A funeral or visitation service can be held for a person who has died of COVID-19 with certain restrictions. Persons who have COVID-19 or are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should be restricted from attending the funeral service or visitation to prevent its spread to others who are attending. Try to provide ways for family members or close friends to join the service remotely through use of available technology or offer to record the funeral service for later viewing.

Consistent with the recommendations from the Illinois Funeral Directors Association (IFDA) Board of Directors, Funeral Home Directors should follow the CDC guidelines on gatherings, including those directly related to any funerals, visitations, or graveside services.

All gatherings of ten (10) or more should be canceled, and/or only conducted with a limit of ten (10) or less people. Viewings should only be permissive with ten (10) or less people. Graveside services should be private and conducted with ten (10) or less people. This information is subject to change per recommendations by the Federal Government and CDC.

Decedents with COVID-19 can be buried or cremated but check for any additional state or local requirements that may dictate the handling and disposition of the remains of individuals who have died of certain infectious diseases.

Source: Community Mitigation Controls
Recommended Guidance for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Funeral Homes

IV. Preventative Actions for General Public Attending a Funeral Service or Visitation

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads. The following basic precautions should be followed by everyone in the general public:

- Stay home if you are sick;
- Follow proper hand hygiene protocols:
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
  - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not available.
- Soap and water or a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be used if the hands are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Following social distancing recommendations and proper handwashing will help prevent the spread of the disease. The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to mainly spread from close contact (i.e., within about 6 feet) with a person who is currently sick with COVID-19 as well as contact with surfaces contaminated with the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The virus likely spreads primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory infections spread. This type of spread is not a concern after death. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. People should consider not touching the body of someone who has died of COVID-19. Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions are at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness. There may be less of a chance of the virus spreading from certain types of touching, such as holding the hand or hugging after the body has been prepared for viewing. Other activities, such as kissing, washing, and shrouding should be avoided before, during, and after the body has been prepared, if possible. If washing the body or shrouding are important religious or cultural practices, families are encouraged to work with their community cultural and religious leaders and funeral home staff on how to reduce their exposure as much as possible.

At a minimum, people conducting these higher risk activities should wear disposable gloves. If splashing of fluids is expected, additional personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required (such as disposable gown, faceshield or goggles and facemask).
Recommended Guidance for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Funeral Homes

V. Preventative Actions for Funeral Home Workers Handling Decedents

Funeral home workers may potentially be exposed to the COVID-19 virus if they are entering homes or other locations where persons with COVID-19 are present, and they may not know if a person has died from COVID-19 or if other persons at the same location have COVID-19. Unless the funeral home worker knows that they will not be exposed to COVID-19 when they are going to a location to handle a decedent, it is recommended that they follow Standard Precautions, and use PPE that has been recommended for Emergency Medical Service employees.

Funeral home workers should follow their routine infection prevention and control precautions when handling a decedent who died of COVID-19. If it is necessary to transfer a body to a bag, follow Standard Precautions, including additional PPE if splashing of fluids is expected. For transporting a body after the body has been bagged, disinfect the outside of the bag with a product on the EPA’s List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). Wear disposable nitrile gloves when handling the body bag. Body bags and removal pouches should be properly disposed after they are used, unless manufacturer's instructions allow for reuse after proper cleaning and disinfection.

Embalmimg can be conducted. During embalming, follow Standard Precautions including the use of additional PPE if splashing is expected (e.g. disposable gown, faceshield or goggles and facemask). Wear appropriate respiratory protection if any procedures will generate aerosols or if required for chemicals used in accordance with the manufacturer’s label. Wear heavy-duty gloves over nitrile disposable gloves if there is a risk of cuts, puncture wounds, or other injuries that break the skin. Additional information on how to safely conduct aerosol-generating procedures is in the CDC’s Postmortem Guidance.

Cleaning should be conducted in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions. Use EPA-approved disinfectants on the List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2, or with a human coronavirus claim. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

After cleaning and removal of PPE, perform hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not available. Soap and water should be used if the hands are visibly soiled.
Recommended Guidance for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Funeral Homes

VI. Resources

Illinois Department of Public Health Information

Illinois Funeral Directors Association

National Funeral Directors Association

CDC Postmortem Specimen Guidelines

CDC Q&A Regarding Funerals

CDC When and How to Wash Your Hands
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Takbir</th>
<th>Hanafi (no raising hands in <em>takbir</em> 2, 3, 4)</th>
<th>Shafi’i/Jamhur (raise hands in each <em>takbir</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| After first takbir          | *Thanā:* 

سُبْحَانَكَ اللهُمَّ وَبَخْمَكَ. ثَبَارَكَ اسْتَفْكَ وَتَسْمَىُ جَلَّكَ. 

ولا إِلَهَ غَيْرِكَ.

Subhanak-Allahuma wa bi hamdika wa tabaraka-smuka wa ta’aala jadduka wa la ilaha ghayrul | *Sūra al-Fatiha*                                                                 |
| After second takbir         | Durud/Salat Ibrahimi (as at the end of prayer in the *tashhahud*)                                               | Durud/Salat Ibrahimi (as at the end of prayer in the *tashhahud*)         |
| After third takbir          | prayers of forgiveness for the deceased 

اللهمُ اغفر لي حيني و متيني و شاهدنا و غانبنا و صغيـرنا و كbirna و ذكرنا و أنثنا و اللهم من أخبيته منا فاخيه على | prayers of forgiveness for the deceased - as in Hanafi prayer |
|                            | الإسلام و من توفيتته منا ف توقفه على الإيمان و برحمتك يا أرحم الرحمين |
                             | Allahumma-ghafir li hayyina wa mayyitina wa shahidina wa gha’ibina wa saghirina wa kabirina wa dhakarina wa unthana. Allahumma man ahyay tahu minna fa ahiyi ‘alal-Islam wa man tawaffaytahu minna fa tawaffahu ‘alal Iman bi rahmatika ya arhamar rahimin |
| After the fourth takbir     | two salams, right and left                                                                                   | prayers of forgiveness for the community, followed by the giving of salam to the right and to the left |
PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM THE CORONAVIRUS

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Minimize handshaking, kissing, and hugging
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Stay home if you are sick

Have symptoms such as fever, cough, & shortness of breath: Stay home and contact your healthcare professional

THE COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS OF GREATER CHICAGO

(312) 506-0070
info@ciogc.org
www.ciogc.org
How to wash your hands

Household members should follow normal preventive actions while at work and home including recommended hand hygiene and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

1. APPLY SOAP ON WET HANDS
2. RUB THE PALM OF YOUR HANDS
3. DON’T FORGET THE BACK!
4. INTERLACE YOUR FINGERS
5. RUB THUMBS
6. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR NAILS AND FINGERTIPS
7. USE WATER TO RINSE YOUR HANDS
8. DRY WITH PAPER TOWEL
WHO IS THE CIOGC COVID-19 JOINT TASK FORCE?

It is over 100 Organizations and individuals who have stepped up to help ALL those who have been affected by this Pandemic.

WHAT THE TASK FORCE CAN DO FOR YOU!

• Covid-19 health screening
• Medical Help
• Relief Efforts
• Mental Health Support
• Unemployment Help
• E-Learning Help

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THE TASK FORCE?

• Elderly living alone
• People with medical conditions
• Low-income individuals
• Unemployed & vulnerable

Questions? or need help?
Give us a call at 847-737-1785

THE COUNCIL
OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS
OF GREATER CHICAGO

OUR TASK FORCE HOTLINE IS LIVE!

Questions? or need help?
Give us a call at 847-737-1785