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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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CIRCULAR ON HAND WASHING FOR THE FUNERAL UNDERTAKER'S INDUSTRY

The National Department of Health has learnt that the public is exposed to a number of hand hygiene disinfection practices that may not comply with the provisions of COVID-19 regulations. This circular serves to provide general information to the funeral undertaker's industry on how to go about providing hand washing or sanitization measures in the conduct of their activities. This might not be a general practice but it has been observed that funeral attendees are being sprayed with different substances, which amongst others include bleach solutions which may have unintended results.

The department hereby state that washing hands with soap for at least 20 seconds is the correct way to be promoted for individuals and communities, however **Hand sanitisers** can be used to decrease infectious agents on the **hands**, where one is not close to a hand wash facility. Sanitisers should only be used on dry hands; if using gloves, sanitise hands before and after use.

The recommended type of sanitiser should contain at least 70% alcohol base. No other mixture is currently recommended for hand hygiene. Sanitisers should be used as supplied by the supplier, no further dilution should be made.

Warning: Funeral undertakers should not:

- Mix their own sanitisers, these products must only be obtained from registered suppliers and must be registered.
- Spray people attending funeral services with bleach solutions.
- Use bleach for a hand washing mixture, this is only recommended for use to disinfect surfaces, the concentration thereof is contained in the public health strategy.
- Dilute sanitisers because this may affect the effectiveness of the product.
- Use sanitisers after using a toilet, and for visibly soiled hands - washing hands with soap should be encouraged at these times.

The use of mixed/ diluted or compromised sanitisers may defeat the purpose of combating the spread of COVID-19 and may cost the users their lives. Everyone is encouraged and requested to work with government to observe good hand hygiene practices for the sake of saving peoples' lives.

Thank you

**Dr SSS BUTHELEZI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF HEALTH**

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