

NICU Checklist for Infant Death

These are some helpful guidelines in the event of the death of a NICU infant.

Also, please refer to the Bereavement Notebooks #1 and #2 for specific information on Bereavement issues. Any member of the Bereavement Committee will be of assistance to you, those names are posted in the conference room and located in Bereavement Notebook #1.

1. At the time of **impending death** :

___ **Chaplain** is informed

___ **Social Worker** is informed

___ **Primary Nurse** is informed

At the **time of death**:

___ **Decedent Affairs** is called - Pic#1405 Contact # 924-5018 (David Haugh)

___ **LIFENET** is called - 1-866-543-3638 (call with any death, not only organ donation)

2. ___ **Obtain Death Packet** (located in family room off A&B Pods, locked Bereavement cabinet **labeled PINK & BLUE**)

3. ___ **Remove lines** ie., PIV's, PAL, ETT, **with Exception** of Central Lines, which are not to be removed ie. UAC, UVC, ECMO Cannulas, Chest tubes, PIC and surgically placed Central lines

4. ___ **Obtain footprints** of infant on footprint card, **handprints or earprints** may also be obtained on an index card. Cut a **lock of hair** and place in plastic bag or tape it to the weight and length card provided in death packet.

5. ___ **Measure infant's length, head circumference** and write this information with infant's full name on the tape measure.

6. ___ Clean infant of any blood etc. Offer that parents may assist in bathing of infant, if parents do not want to -- **Bathe infant**, apply baby lotion to infants' body (parents will smell baby lotion and associate with infant smell)

7. ___ **Dress infant** (clothing is located in cabinet with death packet)

8. ___ **Take (2) Polaroid photographs.** (In the event First Foto prints are lost in the mail) **Take several bereavement photographs Digital** (give disk to family) or **First Foto (First Foto requires written consent** and can only be taken if parents do give written consent to the taking of these photographs) (Verbal consent may be obtained via phone, if parents are not present at time of death, however, when the parents arrive - have them sign the consent, the only exception is: if parents will not be returning to the hospital, photographs may be taken with verbal consent and written consent will be obtained via mail. **Photographs take approximately 3-4 weeks to arrive** and the Bereavement Coordinator will send photos to parents via mail, only after contacting the parents.

9. ___ **Fill out completely the Bereavement Checklist** (BLUE in color, located in Death Packet) This is for the nursing staff's information for bereavement follow-up, so Please fill out as completely as possible, and with any pertinent information that will facilitate follow-up calls, **print baby's full name ; please check with parents' for correct spelling** (example: Jane Crystal Doe) **mother and father's name and mailing address'** Thank You in advance.

10. ___ **Place footprints, hand prints, plastic bag with lock of hair, tape measure, hospital ID band, hat, stuffed animals and toys etc. in envelopes and memory box provided and give to parents at appropriate time, usually when parents are ready to depart the unit.**

11. ___ **Allow parents as much time as they want to hold their infant** and have time alone with infant if desired (not all parents will want to be left alone with infant) NOTE: **Infant is not to leave the NICU area** (either family rooms are appropriate for time alone with their infant's body)

12. **Parents need to inform NICU staff of disposition of their infant**, ie: of the name of a Funeral home or if they want cremation of the body: **Teague Funeral Home** 977-0005 and **Hill & Wood Funeral Home** 296-6148 are the only crematories in Charlottesville. (note: at the parents' request and only if the baby dies within 48 hours of being born, UVA will dispose of the body of a newborn by incineration. This disposal takes place at the UVA incinerator where only human body parts and remains ie: cadavers are incinerated. This disposal takes place on an as needed basis. The ashes are spread in a field owned by UVA. A UVA Chaplain (Richard Haines) says a blessing during the spreading of ashes).
13. **Infant's body** is taken back to bed spot and **prepared for transport to morgue, or with parents** to funeral home or the parents' home—place sticker on morgue tag or fill out with name and hospital ID # and place one morgue tag on infant's toe, place body in body bag, and tape a morgue tag on outside of body bag.***If parents desire to transport the body, notify Decedent Affairs 4-5018 or Pic# 1405. Decedent Affairs will bring a white coffin-like box, and the necessary paperwork, for the parents to sign that is required before the parents will be able to transport the body out of the hospital. Parents may carry the body in their arms out of the hospital, if they desire, with a nurse accompanying them.***
If body is to be taken to the **morgue -- all paperwork must accompany the body**
When the physician returns the Death Call Packet to you, the nurse should complete the Bereavement Checklist form (if the nurse is not available, the HUC may complete this form). When it is done, **ensure that all other pieces of the packet have been completed correctly as per the instructions in the packet.** Send the completed Death Call Packet and the disassembled chart with the body. **DO NOT PUT THE DEATH CALL PACKET IN THE CHART** – the Transportation Attendant will take the Death Call Packet to Decedent Affairs and the chart to Health Information Services.
- . Call for transport to transport body to the morgue.

FYI: The Sympathy Card is to be sent in one week after death of the infant.

If you as the Primary Nurse or the Nurse at the time of the death, do not want to be the nurse to follow-up with the parents by telephone, please let a Bereavement Committee member know so that follow-up is initiated for this family.

