

From TDEC (4/13/2020)

[TDEC Covid-19 Response and Resources](#)

From TDEC Solid Waste Management on Waste Handling (4/13/2020)

<https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/sw-solid-waste.html>

How to Handle Household COVID-19 Waste

- The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has determined that medical waste generated within households from COVID-19 patients can be managed in accordance with routine procedures for household generated medical waste and associated waste. Generally, this waste, if generated by a household, should be **placed in a segregated lined container and disposed of with normal municipal solid waste**. All other regulated medical waste generated from health care agencies are subject to normal [State medical waste regulations](#).

From the Solid Waste Association of North America (March 6th, 2020)

[https://swana.org/initiatives/guidance-on-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)](https://swana.org/initiatives/guidance-on-coronavirus-(covid-19))

Control and Prevention for Solid Waste Management Workers and Employers

- At this time, no special precautions to protect waste workers from COVID-19 are recommended when handling municipal solid waste. Continue to use those precautions already in place to protect workers from the hazards they encounter during their routine job tasks.
- Medical waste suspected or known to be contaminated with COVID-19 should be handled like other regulated medical waste. (COVID-19 is not a Category A infectious substance.)
- For additional information, consult the regulated medical waste information in CDC's guidelines for environmental infection control in healthcare facilities.
- Use approved engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE to prevent worker exposure to medical waste, including sharps and other items that can cause injuries or exposures to infectious materials.
- COVID-19 is a recordable illness, per OSHA. And it is being called a recognized workplace hazard, which is important to know for your employee communications.

From the US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (4/13/2020)

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>

Control and Prevention

- Measures for protecting workers from exposure to, and infection with, the novel coronavirus, COVID-19 depend on the type of work being performed and exposure risk, including potential for interaction with infectious people and contamination of the work environment.

- Employers should adapt infection control strategies based on a thorough [hazard assessment](#), using appropriate combinations of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent worker exposures.

General guidance for all U.S. workers and employers

For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks, it is always a good practice to:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands that are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if sick.
- Recognize personal risk factors. According to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), certain people, including older adults and those with underlying conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19.

Guidance for Solid Waste and Wastewater Management

- This guidance supplements the general interim guidance for workers and employers of workers at increased risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, above.
- Employers should assess the hazards to which their workers may be exposed; evaluate the risk of exposure; and select, implement, and ensure workers use controls to prevent exposure.
- The table below provides examples of waste management work tasks associated with the exposure risk levels in OSHA's occupational exposure risk pyramid, which may serve as a guide to employers in this sector.

Examples of waste management work tasks associated with exposure risk levels

Lower (caution)	Medium	High	Very High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handling municipal waste. ▪ Handling recyclable materials. ▪ Managing wastewater treatment systems. ▪ Performing maintenance tasks on equipment used to process municipal waste, recyclable materials, or wastewater. <p>Note: For activities in the lower (caution) risk category, OSHA's <i>Interim Guidance for Workers and Employers of Workers at Lower Risk of Exposure</i> may be most appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handling waste from healthcare facilities generated in the care of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients. <p><i>Note: The designation of medium risk for this task is consistent with occupational exposure risks for handling any routine medical waste—not just that of COVID-19 patients. Employers and workers should continue to use routine controls for this type of work task.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performing maintenance tasks on equipment used to process medical waste. <p><i>Note: Again, employers and workers should continue to use routine controls for this type of work task.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Category not applicable for most anticipated work tasks. <p>Note: Most solid waste and wastewater management work tasks are associated with no more than medium exposure risk; see the other columns of this chart.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Category not applicable for most anticipated work tasks. <p>Note: Most solid waste and wastewater management work tasks are associated with no more than medium exposure risk; see the other columns of this chart. Avoid tasks that would place workers in this risk category, such as shredding waste, that could re-aerosolize potentially infectious SARS-CoV-2 from environmental surfaces.</p>

Generally, management of waste that is suspected or known to contain or be contaminated with COVID-19 does not require special precautions beyond those already used to protect workers from the hazards they encounter during their routine job tasks in solid waste and wastewater management.

Municipal Waste

- Workers and employers should manage municipal (e.g., household, business) solid waste with potential or known COVID-19 contamination like any other non-contaminated municipal waste.
- Use typical engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE, such as puncture-resistant gloves and face and eye protection, to prevent worker exposure to the waste streams (or types of wastes), including any contaminants in the materials, they manage. Such measures can help protect workers from sharps and other items that can cause injuries or exposures to infectious materials.

Recycling

- As with municipal waste, employers and workers in the recycling industry should continue to use typical engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE, such as puncture-resistant gloves and face and eye protection, to prevent worker exposure to recyclable materials they manage, including any contaminants in the materials.

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Additional Information

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

https://cdn.ymaws.com/wasterecycling.org/resource/resmgr/hwi_minutes/hwi_presentations/HWI_Coronavirus_recommendati.pdf

<https://wasterecycling.org/page/covid19resources>

[APWA COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

[Personal Protection Strategies. UT Howard H Baker Center for Public Policy](#)

[MTAS N95 Respirators and Respiratory Protection Q&A](#)

[EPA Temporary COVID-19 Enforcement Policy](#)

<http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com/>

Information on COVID-19 is still developing and subject to change. Frequently check the [OSHA](#) and [CDC](#) COVID-19 websites for updates.