

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health (BPH) continues to respond to an increasing number of cases of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in West Virginia. BPH is working closely with state agencies, local and federal partners to monitor the ongoing risk of COVID-19 and ensure the health and protection of state residents.

The US Department of Labor—Occupational Safety and Health Administration states that 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). Individuals should use approved engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to prevent worker exposure to medical waste, including sharps and other items that can cause injuries or exposures to infectious materials.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

PERSON-TO-PERSON TRANSMISSION

- Occurs via small droplets from the nose or mouth of the infected person when they cough, sneeze, or exhale.
- Maintain 6 feet distance between yourself and anyone coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home if you feel sick. If you have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance.

GENERAL PREVENTION

- Isolate sick individuals.
- Encourage proper handwashing.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces often.
- Provide education about COVID-19.
- Discourage sharing of food, drinks, etc.
- Wear cloth face coverings.
- Maintain social (physical) distance.

MUNICIPAL WASTE

- Workers and employers should manage municipal solid waste (e.g., household, business) 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, face and eye protection, etc.) 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 exposure to infectious materials.

MEDICAL WASTE

- COVID-19 is not a Category A infectious substance. For medical waste with potential or known COVID-19 contamination, manage waste as regulated medical waste by securing material in a regular (non-red) plastic bag and disposing into the regular waste stream.
- Use typical engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE (such as puncture-resistant gloves, face and eye protection, etc.) 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.
- For regulated medical waste information, consult CDC's [Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities](#) (2003). This document provides additional information related to management of waste streams from hospitals and other healthcare facilities.
- CDC also provides information on medical waste management as a [Question and Answer page](#) on its coronavirus website. See Waste Management: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html>

Questions and concerns can also be directed to the 24/7, toll-free COVID-19 information hotline:

1-800-887-4304

