



# Management of COVID-19 Contaminated Wastes

DEQ is working with the Virginia Department of Health and health care facilities to keep the public safe.

**There are no new requirements for COVID-19 contaminated wastes according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).**

They recommend COVID-19 waste continue to be managed in accordance with Virginia's existing procedures.

- Household waste that is known or suspected of being contaminated with COVID-19 from sick individuals while in their home should still be managed as solid waste and disposed of in the regular trash.
- All regulated medical waste generated by hospitals and healthcare operations that is known or suspected of being contaminated with COVID-19 should still be managed as regulated medical waste, which includes complying with the packaging, labeling, storage, transfer, treatment and disposal requirements according to [Virginia's Regulated Medical Waste Management Regulations](#).
- Existing standards for both regulated medical waste and solid waste can be found in Virginia Code [Chapter 120](#) and [Chapter 81](#), respectively).

Types of [regulated medical waste](#) generated by hospitals and healthcare operations include:

- cultures and stock of microorganisms and biologicals
- human blood and body fluids, and items contaminated with human blood or body fluids
- tissues and other anatomical wastes
- sharps (such as needles, syringes with attached needles, suture needles and scalpels)
- mixtures and residues of regulated medical waste (such as, from cleanups of RMW spills), and;
- solid wastes suspected by the health care professional in charge of being capable of producing an infectious disease in humans.

## **Personal Protective Equipment and Packaging Materials**

- Solid wastes suspected by the health care professional in charge of being capable of producing an infectious disease in humans, such as contaminated personal protective equipment (PPE) from caring for patients suspected or known to have COVID-19, should be managed as regulated medical waste. This may include disposable gloves, gowns, face and eye protection or other PPE that is unable to be disinfected for reuse.
- PPE waste from general cleaning and disinfection of areas with no known COVID-19 contamination should be managed as solid waste (i.e., disposed of with the regular trash) in accordance with Virginia's solid waste regulations ([9VAC20-81](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title9/agency20/chapter81/)). <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title9/agency20/chapter81/>
- Uncontaminated packaging material for medical supplies, cardboard boxes and paper should also be managed as solid waste or recycled, if possible.

**Household waste** (generated by both healthy and sick individuals while in their home) should continue to be managed as solid waste (i.e., disposed of with the regular trash).

Federal recommendations for management of COVID-19 contaminated wastes are available at the following links:

- CDC's [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#)
- CDC's [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- OSHA's [Interim Guidance for Solid Waste and Wastewater Management Workers and Employers](#)

For questions, please contact the waste compliance manager in the appropriate [regional office](#) or visit [www.DEQ.Virginia.gov](http://www.DEQ.Virginia.gov).