

Focus on: Disposal of Single Use Personal Protective Equipment and COVID-19



Contact information

Name: Chuck Matthews
Phone: 360-407-6383
Email: Chuck.Matthews@ecy.wa.gov

ADA Accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6383 or email at Chuck.Matthews@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.



Business, recreational, agricultural, and other activities are resuming around Washington as Governor Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" proclamation and the restrictions it imposed are eased. Working, living, and playing in Washington has changed. Many activities now require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) or its use is strongly encouraged as we all work to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The guidance provided in this document addresses the proper disposal of used PPE generated while taking COVID-19 precautions. This includes disposable and single-use face masks, single-use gloves, and disposable gowns. It is applicable at all businesses, agricultural facilities, recreational venues, residences, and any other place or situation where used PPE as described above is generated.

This guidance is also applicable to medical care facilities, nursing homes, emergency response vehicles, and other places where normal operations and activities generate potentially infectious waste that may require special handling. While potentially infectious waste management in such settings is beyond the scope of this guidance, used PPE disposal for these facilities is addressed appropriately below.

For additional information about the disposal of infectious waste, please contact the environmental health office of your [local health department](#).

General PPE Disposal

Facilities, businesses, and residences may place used PPE generated in response to concerns for COVID-19 in the regular solid waste stream (e.g. municipal trash). For extra precaution, used PPE may be bagged rather than placed loosely in dumpsters or unlined trash receptacles. This will help minimize the potential for Coronavirus exposure to custodial staff, family members, solid waste workers, and others. Lined trash receptacles should meet the need for added protection. Bags should be tied closed before placing them in dumpsters or curbside garbage receptacles.

Medical Facilities and Institutions Generating Potentially Infectious Waste

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no evidence to suggest that waste associated with COVID-19 needs any additional disinfection prior to disposal. Medical care facilities and other institutions that generate potentially infectious wastes should continue to use [Standard Precautions](#) to prevent transmittal of disease. These facilities should already be aware of their generation of wastes subject to special packaging, labeling, transportation, or treatment requirements. Typically, single-use PPE generated as a result of routine activities at these locations may be disposed of in the regular solid waste stream (e.g. municipal trash). Used PPE related to COVID-19 is no different unless it becomes saturated with body fluids that can flow freely or be squeezed from the PPE. Applicable facilities should utilize their standard protocols to determine if used PPE is subject to any special handling requirements or if it may go into the regular solid waste stream.

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See the Department of Health's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19?

Call Department of Health's hotline: **1-800-525-0127**. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. (Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact your health care provider.