

# Coronavirus/Safe Handling of Waste: National Waste & Recycling Association Guidance Document Issued



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03/12/2020

The National Waste & Recycling Association's ("NWRA") Healthcare Waste Institute published a March 9th document titled:

*Frequently Asked Questions, 2019 Novel Coronavirus ("FAQ")*

The NWRA states that the *FAQ* was developed by the Healthcare Waste Institute to provide guidance to questions NWRA member companies have posed that do not routinely collect or process regulated medical waste.

By way of introduction, the *FAQ* states:

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), risk of catching COVID-19 is higher for people who are in close contact with someone who already has the disease. The virus is thought to spread mainly through respiratory droplets (not truly airborne) produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. However, OSHA states that without sustained human-to-human transmission, most American workers are not at significant risk of infection.

The questions addressed by the *FAQ* include:

- What is COVID-19?
- What general precautions should be taken to protect worker safety?
- How should household waste that comes from a home where a patient with COVID-19 be managed?
- How should waste that comes from an office or retail outlet where a patient with COVID-19 be managed?
- How should regulated medical waste (RMW) from COVID-19 be managed?
- Should sharps containers (single-use and reusable) from COVID-19 be put into red bags?
- Should PPE from COVID-19 be put into red bags? What about general waste from patients such as used tissues?
- Are there any special efforts that need to be made to disinfect surfaces from COVID-19?
- Does waste from patients with COVID-19 need to be separated from other infectious waste?

A copy of the *FAQ* can be downloaded [here](#).