COVID-19 Biohazard Management and Medical Waste

For medical waste with potential or known COVID-19 contamination, manage like any other regulated medical waste. COVID-19 is not a Category A infectious substance. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that medical waste generated in the treatment of COVID-19 patients and patients under investigation (PUIs) be managed in accordance with routine procedures.

For regulated medical waste information, consult the regulated medical waste information in CDC's Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities (2003). This document provides additional information related to the 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.

Does NOT go in Biohazard

- Beverage containers
- Ear speculums
- Examining table paper
- Food wrappers
- Paper
- Paper towels
- Patient gowns or drapes
- Tongue depressors

The only reason any of the above items should be placed in the red bags is if they have been soiled with blood or bodily fluid, including fecal material.

Goes in Biohazard

- Drapes, gauze, or other absorbent material used to soak up blood or body fluids
- Expired drugs, vaccines, control solutions and medications (excluding controlled prescription drugs)
- Gloves contaminated with blood or body fluids (including fecal material)
- Paper towels used to absorb blood or body fluids
- Swabs used for obtaining specimens of blood or body fluids
- Used fecal occult blood tests
- Used urinary catheters and foley bags
- Used urine dipsticks
- Used urine pregnancy tests
- Used urine specimen cups after the urine is discarded – preferably in the toilet

REMINDER—All designated sharps containers must be closed before placing into the biohazard bag!

**Only grossly contaminated PPE should be placed into red bags.**

**Sources:**