

TCEQ OSSF Program COVID-19 General Guidance

Is COVID-19 transmitted by wastewater (sewage)?

Wastewater has many pathogens. As always, follow sound practices and use protective equipment to reduce exposure to pathogens. Currently we have no evidence that wastewater transmits COVID-19.

Reduce exposure to pathogens in wastewater?

Use physical barriers to prevent exposure to splashes or sprays of wastewater.

Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as eye protection (goggles, face mask, or face shield); liquid repellent coveralls and gloves.

Properly put on, use, wear, take off, clean/disinfect, maintain, store, and dispose of PPE.

Follow proper hygiene

- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after handling waste or sewage, before eating or drinking, and before and after using the toilet.
- Avoid touching face, mouth, eyes, nose, and open sores and cuts while handling sewage.
- Remove work clothes before eating and eat in designated areas.
- Do **not** smoke or chew tobacco or gum near the wastewater.
- Cover open sores, cuts, and wounds with clean dry bandages.
- Remove work clothes before leaving the worksite.

Will my OSSF (septic) system treat COVID-19?

Properly designed, installed, and maintained Onsite Sewage Facilities are expected to treat viruses and other pathogens in wastewater. COVID-19 is a virus that should safely be treated as well by all indications.

OSSF disinfection concerns

OSSF system that utilized alternative treatment with surface application must have disinfection devices. The devices should be maintained. If the device requires a disinfection product, the product should meet the requirements for the device.

Links for more information

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater#wastewater-sewage>

<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19>

https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html

Email OSSF@tceq.texas.gov with any questions.