

# **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](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html)

Email [OSSF@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:OSSF@tceq.texas.gov) with any questions.