



Disposal of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Contaminated Waste

Medical Waste – General Information

Definition of Medical Waste

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) generally define medical waste as special waste from health care-related facilities ([25 TAC 1.132\(46\)](#) and [30 TAC 326.3\(23\)](#)), and includes: treated and untreated animal waste, bulk human blood and body fluids, microbiological waste, pathological waste, and sharps.

TCEQ's webpage [What is Medical Waste?](#) contains additional information on medical waste generation and treatment.

Note - DSHS's and TCEQ's definitions of medical waste and health-care facilities excludes waste from single or multi-family dwellings, hotels, motels, or other establishments that provide lodging and related services for the public. Waste from these sources may be disposed of with regular municipal solid waste. Additional recommendations for disposal of COVID-19 wastes from residences and businesses are provided below.

Medical Waste Treatment Methods

Approved methods for treatment of medical waste are listed in DSHS rules and include steam sterilization (autoclave), incineration, chemical treatments, and shredding ([25 TAC 1.136](#)). After treatment, medical waste may be managed as routine municipal solid waste and disposed of in a municipal solid waste landfill.

Medical Waste Facilities Regulated by TCEQ

TCEQ regulates entities that manage medical waste, including transportation, storage, transfer, and treatment facilities. These rules include requirements for labeling and packaging, transportation, storage times, and handling procedures.

As of March 2020, Texas has 15 active medical waste treatment facilities. A list of [Active Medical Waste Facilities in Texas](#) is available on the TCEQ website.

Managing COVID-19 Wastes from Health Care-Related Facilities

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that the management of waste materials related to COVID-19 from healthcare facilities should be performed in accordance with routine handling procedures for medical waste (for example: lab specimens, sharps, cleaning cloths, wipes, single-use microfiber cloths, etc.). Continue to reference and follow guidance from CDC, WHO, and DSHS on best practices for managing COVID-19 wastes.

Temporary Hospitals and Clinics

Temporary hospitals and clinics are considered extensions of a health care-related facility and must follow the requirements for the proper management of medical

waste including the TCEQ regulatory guidance for the management of COVID-19 medical waste.

Managing COVID-19 Wastes from Residences and Businesses

Follow CDC's recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for any ill person.

- [Residential](#)
- [Businesses](#)

Double-bag contaminated wastes - place all used gloves, facemasks, and other disposable items in a bag that can be tied closed before placed in another bag with other wastes. Place this bag in a rigid trash container, like a trash can with a lid or dumpster.

Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after removing gloves or handling trash bags.