

Guidelines for handling waste generated at the workplace during COVID-19

It is important to distinguish between two types of healthcare waste:

Healthcare risk waste is a subcategory of hazardous waste and includes human and animal anatomical waste, infectious human and animal waste, sharps, chemical waste, pharmaceutical waste and radioactive waste generated by healthcare professionals, healthcare facilities and other non-healthcare professionals, for example, funeral parlour directors, tattooists, and traditional healers. **Healthcare risk waste is treated as medical waste and requires special disposal.**

AND

Healthcare general waste categories include: packaging material, kitchen waste (domestic waste), office waste and building demolition waste, waste from patients, non-clinical glass, non-infectious waste, non-anatomical waste (for example, paper tissues), disposable curtains, nail clippings, hair, decontaminated waste, and garden and park waste. **Healthcare general waste is disposed of via normal municipal channels.**

***COVID-19 TYPE WASTE GENERATED FROM PEOPLE IN MEDICAL CENTRES, IN ISOLATION OR IN QUARANTINE**

Waste generated from people in isolation or in quarantine in a designated facility, health facility or home, must be treated as healthcare risk waste in terms of SANS 10248-1. All healthcare waste produced during patient care, irrespective of whether that patient is a confirmed COVID-19 case or not, is considered to be infectious.

All waste items that have come into contact with individuals that are confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19, are disposed of securely in a black or red refuse plastic bag, separate from the rest of the general waste.



Healthcare risk waste identification, segregation, storage and disposal must be managed in accordance with SANS 10248-1. Healthcare risk waste should be properly packaged in sealed, leak and puncture proof containers or boxes. Healthcare risk waste must be labelled with the relevant bio-hazard symbols or signs and marked "Coronavirus or COVID-19" and should be stored separately from other generated waste.

The collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of healthcare risk waste may only be performed by an appropriate, qualified service provider.

All personnel or staff members that are in contact with patients must be geared with appropriate personal protective equipment at all times to prevent exposure or risk to health.

All bags, bins and boxes must be adequately sealed so as not to leak any fluids, and must be wiped down with 0.05% chlorine solution before being stored or removed.

*COVID-19 TYPE WASTE GENERATED FROM OFFICES AND HOMES OF UNKNOWN COVID-19 INFECTIONS

Government guidelines highlight that COVID-19 type waste generated from areas not known to be contaminated by COVID-19 including offices, workplace areas or at homes can be classified as non-hazardous and should be disposed of in strong black or red bags and closed completely before collection and disposal by municipal waste services. When full, the black or red refuse plastic bags should then be placed in a second black or red refuse plastic bag (double bag) and tied to prevent any waste from spilling.

The Waste CoE acknowledges the intent of certain Eskom BUs to adopt a precautionary approach and implement measures in their BUs more conservatively than the guidelines dictate. Such practice is encouraged so long as the BUs management has been engaged and approves.

Employees are requested to wash their hands with water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling wheelie bins or refuse plastic bags. This measure is to protect both the public and the essential refuse removal teams.

Transport of hazardous waste:

It is not anticipated that Eskom staff will be required to transport waste known to be COVID-19 contaminated. Besides medical care professionals and employees authorised to do so, Eskom employees will refrain from transporting waste known to be COVID-19 contaminated. Arrangements should be made with either the relevant medical centre or the Department of Health.



Employees and refuse removal teams are requested to sanitise wheelie bin handles and wheelie bin covers.

Employees are requested to refrain from approaching refuse removal personnel. Please keep a distance of 2 metres at all times.



Please put your bags and wheelie bins out for collection, as close as possible to the time of arrival of the waste collection services.

Please secure the bags in order to ensure that your pets do not have access to them to prevent them from tearing them and spilling the contents.

*COVID-19 WASTE TYPE includes: used tissues, disposable cleaning cloths, gloves, masks, etc.
