

Safe Operations of Trash Collection, Recycling, and Sewage Treatment Plants

Updated December 2020

This document provides guidance for townships to safely conduct trash and recycling collection and operate sewage treatment plants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trash Collection and Recycling Operations

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend any extra precautions for employees engaged in trash collection and recycling operations other than standard operating procedures, including enforcing social distancing between employees and community residents, keeping a healthy and safe work environment by incorporating regular cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and making sure that all high-touch areas of the trucks are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

To help limit the possible airborne transmission of the coronavirus, some townships are now requiring that all trash be bagged, even if set out in another bin. Garbage truck operators should always practice social distancing between other crew members and any members of the public they interact with and wear masks when talking to residents while on their routes.

For townships that operate drop-off trash or recycling operations, no special precautions are needed for those who use or staff such facilities other than to enforce social distancing and wearing of masks and require one-way traffic flow and that all trash be bagged before being disposed of.

To access specific CDC guidelines for township curbside trash collection and recycling operations, [click here](#).



Townships that operate drop-off trash and recycling facilities should enforce social distancing, require masks, set up a one-way traffic flow, and require that all trash be bagged before being disposed of.

Sewage Treatment Plant Operations

The CDC does not recommend any extra precautions other than standard operating procedures, wearing and cleaning personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate, and employee training [as outlined here](#). Given the essential nature of these employees, maintaining a safe working environment is one of the best ways to ensure that they will continually be available to perform these essential functions.

These standard operating procedures should also require social distancing between employees and the wearing of masks and recommends that customers pay bills online or by mailing in checks rather than visit the administrative building.

Also, workers handling human waste or sewage should be provided with the proper PPE, training on how to use it, and hand-washing facilities. Workers should wash hands with soap and water immediately after removing their PPE. The following PPE is recommended for workers handling human waste or sewage:

- **Goggles:** to protect eyes from splashes of human waste or sewage.
- **Protective face mask or splash-proof face shield:** to protect nose and mouth from splashes of human waste or sewage.
- **Liquid-repellent coveralls:** to keep human waste or sewage off clothing.
- **Waterproof gloves:** to prevent exposure to human waste or sewage.
- **Rubber boots:** to prevent exposure to human waste or sewage.



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