

# Waste Management

The CDC has determined that medical waste generated in the treatment of COVID-19 patients and patients under investigation (PUIs) be managed in accordance with routine procedures. There are no additional packaging or transportation requirements from the Department of Transportation (DOT) for regulated medical waste or sharps.

- Facilities are responsible for packaging waste for transport to treatment facilities.
- Each bag must be hand tied by gathering and twisting the neck of the bag and using a tie or hand knot to secure the bag, and each container must be securely closed.
- Closed bags must not be visible once a secondary container such as a box or reusable tote or tub is closed.

## COVID-19 and Medical Waste

Management of laundry, food service utensils, and medical waste should also be performed in accordance with routine procedures. (1)

### What is Medical Waste?

Medical waste is healthcare waste that that may be contaminated by blood, body fluids or other potentially infectious materials and is often referred to as regulated medical waste.(2) Examples include:

- Microbiology laboratory waste (e.g., microbiologic cultures and stocks of microorganisms)
- pathology and anatomy waste
- blood specimens from clinics and laboratories
- blood products and other body-fluid specimens
- Certain sharp items (e.g., needles and scalpel blades) contaminated with blood (3)

Although any item that has had contact with blood, exudates, or secretions may be potentially infective, treating all such waste as infective is neither practical nor necessary. Federal, state, and local guidelines and regulations specify the categories of medical waste that are subject to regulation and outline the requirements associated with treatment and disposal.(3) State regulations also address the degree or amount of contamination (e.g., blood-soaked gauze) that defines the discarded item as a regulated medical waste.(3) Check your state for additional regulation regarding treatment of medical waste. (4)