

March 18, 2020

Idaho Municipal Landfill Managers,

1. If you are experiencing any disruptions resulting from staffing issues and you need relief from a provision or provisions of your operating plan please notify the appropriate DEQ regional office and health district, or let me know and I can forward the information. We will record any temporary approvals that may be needed, and your notice will also serve to keep us aware of challenges occurring around the state, giving us an opportunity to assist if possible.
2. At this time DEQ is not issuing any directives that would alter the current regulatory landscape applicable to wastes potentially contaminated with COVID-19. COVID-19 waste from hospitals is considered medical waste and is no different in character than other medical waste. In the industry it is referred to as "Regulated Medical Waste" or RMW. It is bagged and tied off in red bags and in most cases those bags are transported in red, hard-sided secondary containers to a treatment site. Idaho has only one treatment facility and it is operated by Larson Miller Medical Waste Disposal east of Boise. All other RMW generated in Idaho is treated outside the state, and the vast majority of RMW generated in Idaho is transported by Stericycle, Larson Miller or BioSafe Solutions. Once treated, the waste is sterile and can be landfilled safely in bulk. Normal precautions should be taken at the working face and there is no elevated risk to landfill workers posed by disposal of treated COVID-19 waste.

In Idaho only RMW from facilities defined as "hospitals" is required by law to be treated prior to disposal. I expect that Idaho landfills have operating plan provisions in place to expand this requirement to all bulk commercial medical waste, including that generated by non-hospital healthcare facilities, nursing homes, and special COVID-19 testing sites. For worker safety, independent of the COVID-19 issue, DEQ expects such a policy. If you accept medical waste and you don't know if it is treated then ask the transporter for documentation. This is also part of everyone's duty to the Idaho community to make all efforts possible to arrest the spread of this disease. For more information on medical waste collection, treatment or disposal you may contact me or one of these medical waste transporters operating in Idaho:

Stericycle – Selin Hoboy – shoboy@stericycle.com (847) 456-8889

Larson Miller – Hal Miller – halmiller@larsonmiller.com (208) 323-7272

BioSafe – Cory Miller – coryjmiller_1999@yahoo.com (406) 240-7530

3. We are all aware that some households will be generating COVID-19 waste. Currently, there are no special precautions recommended for solid waste collection or landfill personnel relating to household or unregulated medical waste. Use typical engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and personal protection equipment (PPE), such as puncture-resistant gloves and face/eye protection, to prevent worker exposure. In addition to posting this information on our website, DEQ is currently identifying ways to assist local governments and waste collection companies in disseminating instruction to

affected households to ensure their waste bags are tightly closed and curbside containers are not overfilled so the lids can close completely.

DEQ is monitoring these issues and will pass on any additional information that becomes available. If you need more information please review the following resources:

[https://swana.org/initiatives/guidance-on-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)](https://swana.org/initiatives/guidance-on-coronavirus-(covid-19))

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/waste-mgmt-remediation/solid-waste/medical-waste/>

Best regards,



Matt Beeter | Solid Waste Program Manager
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 North Hilton
Boise, Idaho 83706
Office: (208)373-0121
<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/>

Our mission is to protect human health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water. "