



Frequently Asked Questions Infectious Waste Issues and COVID-19

About the Definition of Infectious Waste

Question: Is waste from hospitals that is contaminated with COVID-19 defined by Ohio EPA as infectious waste?

Answer: Ohio law regulates "infectious waste" as a separate category of waste. Infectious Waste is defined in Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3745-27-01. Waste generated from hospitals that is contaminated with COVID-19 meets the definition of infectious waste under Ohio's regulations.

About Treatment and Disposal of Infectious Waste

Question: How are Ohio hospitals required to manage infectious waste?

Answer: Under Ohio's regulations, hospitals are required to identify their infectious waste and segregate it from other, noninfectious waste. Infectious waste is put into red, labeled containers and sealed. The infectious waste is then treated, either at the hospital or at a licensed (off-site) treatment facility, until it is no longer infectious. Once treated and rendered noninfectious, the waste can be disposed at a licensed solid waste landfill.

Question: Are Ohio's solid waste landfills allowed to accept infectious waste directly from hospitals?

Answer: No, landfills are prohibited from accepting untreated infectious waste directly from hospitals. Waste must first be treated to a point where the waste is no longer infectious before it can be legally disposed of in a licensed Ohio solid waste landfill. This prohibition for landfills has been in Ohio law since 1988.

Question: Does infectious waste treated in Ohio have to be disposed in an Ohio landfill?

Answer: No. Treated infectious waste is not required to be disposed of at an Ohio landfill and can be disposed of in an out-of-state landfill.

Question: Can infectious waste from out-of-state hospitals be sent to Ohio for treatment and disposal?

Answer: Yes. Infectious waste from other states can be sent to a licensed infectious waste treatment facility in Ohio. But regardless of what state it comes from, the hospital's infectious waste would need to be properly packaged in sealed, labeled containers before it could be accepted at a licensed infectious waste treatment facility in Ohio. Once infectious wastes have been properly treated to render them noninfectious, this waste can be disposed of in a solid waste landfill in Ohio.

General Information

Question: Where do I find Ohio's infectious waste laws and regulations?

Answer: Ohio's infectious waste law is codified in Ohio Revised Code Ch. 3734 and Ohio EPA's regulations are found in Ohio Administrative Code Rules 3745-27-30 through 3745-27-39.

Question: Where can I get some basic questions answered about COVID-19?

Answer: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) are good sources for information about COVID-19. ODH also has a helpline at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH where you can speak directly to a professional from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day, including weekends.