

COVID-19 Operational Considerations

A summary for responders conducting waste management operations during the COVID-19 outbreak



COVID-19 Operational Considerations

Hierarchy of Waste Management Controls



COVID-19 Guidance on applying hierarchy of waste management controls:

- The Waste Management Field Guide provides information on management of waste generated during a typical response.
- During a COVID-19 response, the main difference (in addition to the information in the main field guide) is related to PPE, sanitization and items used in high-volumes to support responders (e.g. food and drink containers).
- This is predominantly because additional PPE will be needed minimize infection risk, increased cleaning will take place, items which are typically reused may be disposed of.
- The over-arching response strategy takes consideration of disease management in determining the response techniques to be employed in the response. A key principle of this is to minimize the number of responders deployed on operations.



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Hierarchy of Waste Management Controls



Considerations for adjusting the normal hierarchy of waste for a COVID-19 response are outlined below:

Elimination

The overarching response strategy, informed by NEBA/SIMA, seeks to reduce the number of responders deployed. This has the effect of eliminating waste from being generated where possible – both in terms of PPE, and other activities needed to support responders.



Reduce

Fewer responders involved in the overall response would have the effect of reducing waste. Reducing PPE waste should not be a higher priority than ensuring sufficient PPE is available and that it is replaced regularly to ensure it remains effective. For command centres, the opportunity to reduce waste may also be limited by the preference to utilize disposable items to minimise exposure risk (e.g. food containers, cutlery and water bottles).



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Hierarchy of Waste Management Controls



Considerations for adjusting the normal hierarchy of waste for a COVID-19 response are outlined below:

Recycle

There is limited scope to recycle PPE during a typical response, and this is unchanged for a response during COVID-19. For other waste streams (e.g. food and drink containers, cutlery, water bottles) recyclable disposable items are preferred where available.



Treat

Contaminated or potentially contaminated waste should be treated accordingly before handling and final disposal. WHO guidance recommends leaving waste for at least 72 hours before handling to reduce the risk of infection.



Disposal

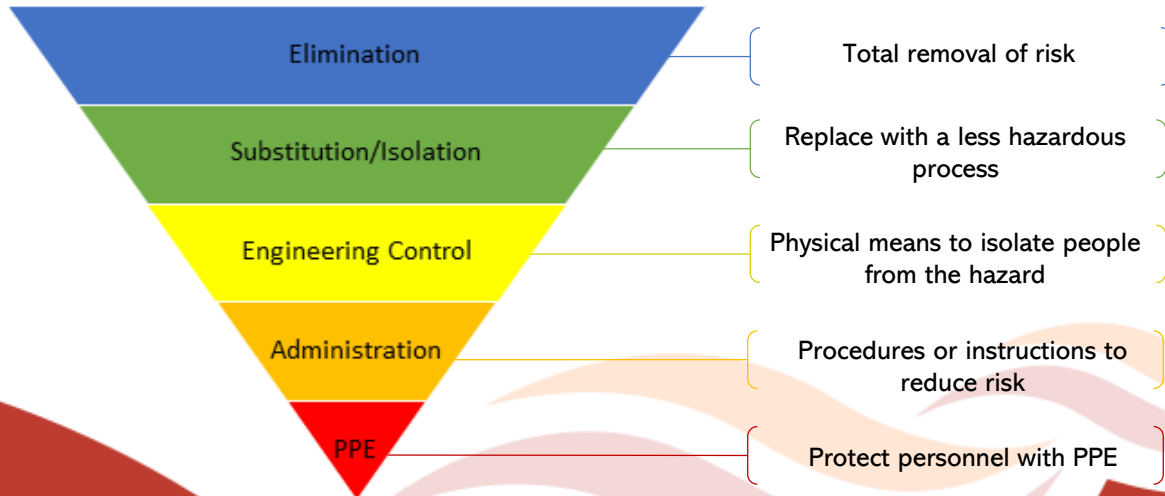
Final disposal options for oiled waste, PPE and other waste streams that have a Covid exposure risk, should be carefully considered with all options open to the waste manager. This final stage must be carefully considered in line with local legislation and recognized good practices.

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Hierarchy of Controls

- This guide assumes that a systematic approach to developing a response strategy has been followed, which combines a spill impact mitigation assessment and considerations for minimising the risk to responders and communities posed by COVID-19 – and that waste management operation is an element of the identified response technique.
- A hierarchy of controls is used to manage risk related to COVID-19 during waste management operations.



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Waste Management

Substitution

- Waste to be placed into skips or bins instead of stored on the ground, this is to reduce double handling of waste and prevent the spread of infection
- The bins should have a lid that is able to close securely and preferably that is foot-operated to reduce infection via common touch points.
- If possible, consider the use of mechanical means during operation which will help to reduce the manpower on-site.
 - This will reduce the amount of waste generated.

Administration

- Take into consideration of the increase of waste generated due to PPE related to COVID-19 such as respiratory masks, hand gloves, hand sanitiser and water bottles.
 - This includes the Incident Management Team (IMT) and Command Post.

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Waste Management

Administration

- For shoreline / inland clean-up operations, place smaller bins across the operational area specifically for COVID-19 related PPE waste such as masks, nitrile gloves and hand sanitizers.
 - This will help in segregating the waste between COVID-19 PPE and other waste.
 - This will also ensure that the workers are not tempted to litter the masks and hand sanitizer bottles.
 - At the end of the day, teams are to consolidate and bring the collected waste to the main waste collection point.
 - Consideration and training to be given to the sequence of PPE removal.
- Where possible, one person to be in control of the waste collection area, this is so they can help responders with the removal of PPE and correctly segregate into appropriate waste bins
- Place all PPE into a plastic bag and tie securely, place this bag into a second bag and tie, the bag needs to be stored for 72 hours before it is being disposed of in the general domestic waste bin.
 - If there are multiple teams, consider separating the waste collected during the mentioned 72 hours.
- Use certified waste collector to ensure proper disposal of waste in accordance with local government COVID-19 regulations.

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Waste Management

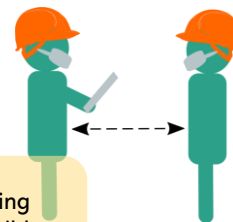


Administration

Personnel are to be reminded to take their temperature daily before and after their work shift

Administration

Personnel are to maintain physical distancing according to local regulation wherever possible and practicable



Administration

Personnel are to conduct self-assessment and record their temperature/self-assessment in a log-book



Administration

Regularly wash/sanitise hands with clean water and soap or utilise alcohol-based sanitiser. Avoid touching the face/mouth/eyes/nose



Do refer to [Specific Measures for In-field Response](https://www.oilspillresponse.com/COVID-19/) document which can be found at <https://www.oilspillresponse.com/COVID-19/> for more specific details. Task specific risk assessment should be used to govern the specific measures implemented.

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Waste Management



Administration

Personnel are to communicate via VHF radio when in-field and avoid in-person communication as much as possible



Administration

Ensure that proper waste management is carried out at all sites. Respirators and masks are to be disposed of properly



Administration

Avoid large gatherings – stagger meals and breaks where possible



PPE

Don appropriate PPE based on risk assessment and do not share PPE and personal items



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