

COVID-19 Testing at New Mexico Schools

Infectious Waste Management Guidance and Procedure

PURPOSE:

To minimize the infectious waste hazard and potential public health risk associated with administering COVID-19 tests for students and staff at New Mexico schools and to comply with New Mexico infectious waste regulations (20.9.2-20.9.10 NMAC) and federal regulations.

REGULATORY GUIDANCE:

1. Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling or disposing of infectious waste. Impermeable gloves shall be worn by all employees handling infectious waste.
2. Segregate infectious waste from other waste at the point of generation. Once a COVID-19 Test Kit has been administered, the swab, dropper bottle, and test card used for each individual is infectious waste and must be managed as such, starting with placement in an infectious waste receptacle lined with a specified biohazard plastic bag. Dispose of all other materials associated with the test kit, such as the box and paper instructions, as regular office trash or recycling as appropriate.
3. Contain all infectious waste in red bags clearly identified with the Biological Hazard symbol in accordance with OSHA requirements [29 CFR 1910.145(f)]. Red bags should be used for no other purpose than for the disposal of infectious waste.
4. When the bags are full, securely tie closed to prevent leakage or expulsion during handling, transport and storage.
5. Place securely tied infectious waste bags in lined rigid containers that are labeled as containing infectious waste and securely close container with proper lid.
6. The rigid containers shall meet the requirements of the Department of Transportation (49 CFR 173.197) including that the containers are: rigid; leak resistant; impervious to moisture; of sufficient strength to prevent tearing or bursting under normal conditions of use; sealed to prevent leakage during transport; and puncture resistant.
7. If other waste is placed in the same rigid container holding regulated infectious waste, then all of the waste is to be handled as infectious waste. The selected infectious waste hauler (current list attached) will provide bags, liners and rigid containers.
8. When the rigid containers are full, place in a storage area that is protected from the elements and only accessible to authorized personnel.
9. When rigid containers are deemed full and placed in storage, clearly label indicating the name and address of the generator, contents, date placed in storage and labeled with a bio-hazard symbol.
10. No compactors, grinders or similar devices shall be used to reduce the volume of the infectious waste.
11. All infectious waste must be transported off-site for disposal by a New Mexico registered infectious waste hauler. Contact the preferred registered hauler from the list provided to set up pick up and transport of infectious waste.
12. Transport of the infectious waste must be accompanied with a special waste manifest (example attached), which contains the generator, transporter, and treatment facility information required by 20.9.8.19 NMAC.

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13. The infectious waste shall not be stored on-site for longer than 90 days while awaiting disposal, once the container is deemed full.
14. The person responsible for the management of infectious waste must be identified with a corresponding telephone number.

NMED SOLID WASTE BUREAU CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Teri D. Monaghan, Enforcement Section Manger, (505) 919-9467
- Daniel R. Galasso, Enforcement Coordinator, (505) 795-1232

5-Step Procedure for Disposing of COVID-19 Test Kits:

Step 1 – Once test kit is administered, dispose of swab, dropper bottle, and test card as infectious waste and place in the infectious waste receptacle (inside a red bag) near point of generation; dispose of test kit cardboard box and paper instructions as normal office trash.

Step 2 – Once red bag is full, securely tie off and relocate to the identified storage location and place in lined rigid infectious waste container. When the larger rigid container is deemed full, place a label on the container indicating the date when full and have it picked up by the selected registered infectious waste hauler within 90 days.

Step 3 - Schedule pickup by the selected registered infectious waste hauler for transport of infectious waste to the preferred infectious waste treatment facility; see attached infectious waste hauler list.

Step 4 – For day of pickup, complete the top portion of a special waste manifest with the generator information completed; see attached manifest examples.

Step 5 – Ensure receipt of final completed manifest from the treatment facility (within 60 days) and retain for a minimum of three years.

Attachments:

Infectious Waste Hauler List
Special Waste Manifest Examples