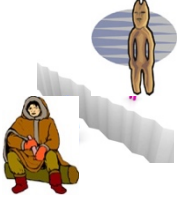




Rural Alaska Community Waste Management Covid-19 Considerations for Local Program Decision Makers

Is it safe to handle waste? According to CDC and WHO - **Yes!** And **it is necessary to protect public health**. Waste itself is **not** considered a source of Covid-19 exposure. *People* who are handling the waste – workers and the public – **can** be an exposure source. So **how** people handle their waste needs to change. Every community situation is different, and what is best for one community may not be best for yours. Specific advice from a public health authority is best. But they may be busy, or not understand rural waste management practices enough. These guidelines will help.

General advice for Alaska Rural Communities includes:



- ◆ Only 1 person at a time inside an enclosed space (like a shed)
- ◆ Ensure everyone, workers and non-workers can keep more than 6 feet away from each other
- ◆ Disinfect shared surfaces after each use, like handles, knobs, locks, even pens and clipboards
- ◆ If house-to-house collection isn't possible, prioritize collecting from Elders and others who are high risk



Special Waste Programs: Daily management of community garbage **is** necessary for public safety and health. But **composting, recycling, and salvaging activities are normally not necessary**. Operate a will-call service for cracked lead-acid batteries and used oil, if needed. These wastes can risks if they are kept in and around the home. Items like old electronics are safe for residents to store. If a resident needs access to the salvage or pet carcass areas –require approval from program staff first.



Which waste system might reduce risks of Covid-19 infection or spread the most?



For most communities, a house-to-house collection program is best

Trash should be placed *outside* the home, and **before** the worker collects it. The door should be closed when the worker arrives. Do not collect from homes when trash bags are poorly secured. Educate or enforce for secured bags.



Next best, an in-town drop-off collection system



- ◆ **Distance** Folks need to keep more than 6 feet away while waiting for others to use the drop-off bins.
- ◆ **One Adult** *by themselves*, from each house should take out the trash.
- ◆ **Wipe and Sanitize** Residents and workers should wipe off shared surfaces before and after use with disinfectant wipes (handles, lid lips, etc.). Use sanitizer as soon as possible, and wash hands immediately once home. Next, sanitize anything that you touched before you washed your hands.

Next best, self-haul to landfill with an attendant

- ◆ **Wait Your Turn** More than 6 feet between residents and workers and just 1 person inside a shed at a time.
- ◆ **Drop-off** Designate a bin or area for residents to unload their trash near the landfill entrance – so the operator can place waste properly. No handing over trash to the waste operator. Residents should be able to unload trash safely without touching the gate or other shared surfaces.
- ◆ **Wipe and Sanitize** Workers should wipe shared surfaces before and after use (handles, lips, gates, locks – anything that was touched). Residents should use sanitizer as soon as possible, and wash hands immediately once home, followed by sanitizing anything that they touched before they washed their hands.



Unload Here

Self-haul with open access is the worst method because there is least control

But it is **still safer than waste piling up in-town and you can minimize risks with community help**

Post clear signs about where to unload, where to wait, . residents and workers should **wipe off shared surfaces before and after use** --handles, lips, gates, locks – anything that was touched. **They should use sanitizer as soon as possible, and wash hands** immediately once home, followed by sanitizing anything they touched before they washed their hands.



All systems require proper disinfection, social distancing, and potentially cloth face coverings.

For detailed suggestions and more resources on Covid-19 and waste disposal visit www.zendergroup.org/Covid.html
Questions about your specific situation? Phone Zender staff at 277-2111 or Email the Solid Waste Alaska Taskforce at 907swat@gmail.com - If we don't know, we will help find someone who does.

