



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

# Medical waste management during COVID-19 pandemic

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As informed by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), disposal of bio-medical waste including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kit worn by healthcare professionals as well as general public became a challenge during the on-going Corona Virus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Public Health' being a State subject, information relating to increase in COVID-19 cases among individuals employed in garbage collection and disposal, due to mismanagement in disposal of bio-medical waste including PPE kit etc., is not centrally maintained.

As per Bio-medical Waste Management (BMWM) Rule, 2016, waste generated from Healthcare Facilities is required to be treated and disposed as per provisions under said Rules. CPCB has also prepared guidelines, which gives guidance on Handling, Treatment & Disposal of bio-medical waste in line with provisions under BMWM Rules, 2016.

Further, CPCB issued separate guidelines for 'Handling, Treatment & Disposal of bio-medical waste generated during Treatment/Diagnosis/Quarantine of COVID-19 patients' which gives guidance on management of COVID-19 related bio-medical waste including used masks and gloves. These guidelines were initially issued on 19.03.2019 and later revised on 17.07.2020.

As per CPCB Guidelines, used PPEs like face shields, goggles, hazmat suit, plastic coverall, used masks, head cover, shoe cover etc. generated from COVID-19 isolation wards at Healthcare Facilities shall be segregated and

sent to Common Facilities for disposal as per Bio-medical

Waste Management Rules, 2016 (BMWM Rules). However, used PPEs like masks and gloves generated in Common Households, Commercial Establishments, Institutions, etc., are required to store separately for minimum 72 hours for disposal along with solid waste after cutting or shredding. Such shredded used masks from household can be collected as dry solid waste by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Guidelines issued by CPCB have been circulated to all stakeholders and specific Directions were also issued by CPCB to all State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) to ensure compliance.

The following additional measures have been taken by CPCB for improvement of management of bio-medical waste during COVID-19 pandemic:

- i. In order to monitor COVID-19 related bio-medical waste, CPCB developed COVID-19 waste tracking App named "COVID19BWM". Both Android Mobile and Web versions of software application were designed for waste generators, CBWTF Operators, SPCBs/PCCs and Urban



Local Bodies (ULBs). 1<sup>st</sup> version of the App. has been introduced and a demonstration was given to SPCBs/PCCs and other stakeholders in May, 2020. SPCBs and CBWTFs were directed to ensure usage of Tracking App. CPCB vide it's letter dated 21.07.2020 issued Show Cause Notice to 106 CBWTFs for not using the COVID19BWM tracking App.

- ii. Directions under section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act were issued in July, 2020 to all the SPCBs/PCCs to ensure compliance to CPCB guidelines for effective management of bio-medical waste. However, CPCB has also created separate page on its website for dissemination of awareness on management of COVID-19 related waste, including safe disposal of masks and PPEs by general public.

The Minister of State (Health and Family Welfare), Sh Ashwini Kumar Choubey stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha here today.

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**MV/SJ**

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