



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF USED MASKS

INTRODUCTION

The main transmission mode of COVID-19 has been identified to be through respiration droplets and contact.

Use of masks while in public is a legal requirement in Kenya as an intervention of preventing infection and transmission. Used masks are considered as infectious waste, and classified as healthcare waste. Large volumes of infectious wastes thus will be generated..

This therefore calls for proper management of the said waste from generation to final disposal.

The ministry has developed the following guidelines for use at the community level including: recreation parks, bus parks, shopping malls, and at the household level for the management of used masks.

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FORWARD

Masks, used as protective devices against transmission of COVID 19 give rise to potentially infectious waste. The waste is thus classified in the category of healthcare / medical waste requiring care in handling and management.

The presence of used masks and gloves in the environment, is not only an eyesore but also a potential source for infections

In this recognition, the Ministry of Health has developed these guiding principles on how to manage waste arising from these used masks. This waste will arise from individuals, households and public places.



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1. Used masks shall be considered as infectious waste.
2. The infectious waste shall be managed as per National Policy on Injection Safety and Medical Waste Disposal 2007, Healthcare Waste Management Guidelines 2011,, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) principles as well as the provisions of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) of 1999 Waste Management Regulations of 2006
3. The infectious waste shall be stored in separate receptacles lined with yellow- colour coded liner bags and be collected for transportation at least once daily by vehicles licensed by NEMA for treatment by way of incineration or autoclaving/shredding or microwaving/shredding.
4. Cities, County Leaderships and Local Authorities shall provide bins well labelled "biohazard waste" lined with yellow-colour coded leak proof liner bags at designated bus stops and recreation parks where such waste will be stored before collection by contracted firms for treatment and disposal.
5. For retail outlets, shopping malls, office blocks and other public places, the management of such areas shall provide separate receptacles lined with yellow colour coded leak proof liner bags where the used masks will be stored awaiting collection and transportation for treatment and final disposal.
6. In urban set ups where waste management services *do* exist in places such as: gated communities, estates and other institutions, where there are contracted firms to manage waste and the contract terms allow, the scope of work may be expanded to accommodate management of the infectious waste provided protection of public health is ensured and is in line with the Waste Management Regulations of 2006.
7. In rural set ups and household level where waste management services *do not* exist, the used masks shall be disposed of into pit latrines and in instances where there are no pit latrines, a pit shall be dug where the used masks shall be disposed therein and immediately covered with soil.
8. In the informal settlements, the used masks should be stored into separate receptacles which are lined with yellow colour coded liner bags and taken to a common waste collection point where the local public health officer and community health volunteer

arrange for collection and transportation to the nearest health care facility for proper management with other healthcare waste.