



COVID-19 Guidance – On-site Sewage Management Systems Contractors

The Governor issued an Executive Order, signed 4/02/2020 and effective beginning 6:00PM on 4/03/2020 until 11:59PM Monday 4/13/2020 for a statewide shelter-in-place.

Septic Pumpers, Installers, and Portable Sanitation Contractors may continue to operate provided that they comply with the twenty (20) requirements for Social Distancing as defined for a business meeting the Minimum Basic Operations definition under Governor Kemp's Executive Order.

COVID-19 Guidance

The expanding global outbreak of respiratory infections due to a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has now been declared a pandemic. Cases of COVID-19 are rapidly increasing in Georgia.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. The best way to prevent infection with any respiratory virus is to use the same preventative strategies used during a normal cold and flu season: get a flu shot, wash hands regularly, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home when experiencing symptoms of illness until they resolve.

Everyone has a role in keeping our community healthy, and that includes our OSSMS Industry made up of Septic Pumpers, Installers, and Portable Sanitation Contractors.

CDC is reviewing all data on COVID-19 transmission as information becomes available. At this time, the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 through sewerage systems is thought to be low. Although transmission of COVID-19 through sewage may be possible, there is no evidence to date that this has occurred. This guidance will be updated as necessary as new evidence is assessed.

Wastewater and sewage workers should use standard practices, practice basic hygiene precautions, and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as prescribed for current work tasks.

Everyday Disease Prevention

Workers who handle human waste or sewage may be at increased risk of becoming ill from waterborne diseases. To reduce this risk and protect against illness, such as diarrhea, the following guidance should be followed by workers and employers.

- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after handling human waste or sewage.
- Avoid touching face, mouth, eyes, nose, or open sores and cuts while handling human waste or sewage.

- After handling human waste or sewage, wash your hands with soap and water *before* eating or drinking.
- Keep open sores, cuts, and wounds covered with clean, dry bandages.
- After handling human waste or sewage, wash your hands with soap and water *before* and *after* using the toilet.
- Before eating, remove soiled work clothes and eat in designated areas away from human waste and sewage-handling activities.
- Do **not** smoke or chew tobacco or gum while handling human waste or sewage.
- Gently flush eyes with safe water if human waste or sewage contacts eyes.
- Use waterproof gloves to prevent cuts and contact with human waste or sewage.
- Wear rubber boots at the worksite and during transport of human waste or sewage.
- Remove rubber boots and work clothes before leaving worksite.
- Clean contaminated work clothing daily with 0.05% chlorine solution (1 part household bleach to 100 parts water)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Workers handling human waste or sewage should be provided proper PPE, training on how to use it, and hand washing facilities. Workers should wash hands with soap and water *immediately after* removing PPE. The following PPE is recommended for workers handling human waste or sewage:

- **Goggles:** to protect eyes from splashes of human waste or sewage.
- **Protective face mask or splash-proof face shield:** to protect nose and mouth from splashes of human waste or sewage.
- **Liquid-repellent coveralls:** to keep human waste or sewage off clothing.
- **Waterproof gloves:** to prevent exposure to human waste or sewage.
- **Rubber boots:** to prevent exposure to human waste or sewage.

Executive Order to Ensure a Safe and Healthy Georgia through Shelter in Place

The Executive Order mandates that businesses are not allowed to have more than 10 people gathered at a single location unless six feet of space can be maintained between each person. Businesses that are in operation are also being ordered to take measures to decrease the exposure and spread of the coronavirus by screening and evaluating workers who show signs of illness and enhancing the "sanitation of the workforce,".

“Minimum Basic Operations”

Septic Pumpers, Installers, and Portable Sanitation Contractors may perform Minimum Basic Operations under the Shelter in Place Order. Minimum Basic Operations are the minimum necessary activities for a business to provide services, manage inventory, process payroll and employee benefits, or other related functions. Minimum necessary activities include remaining open to the public subject to the restrictions of the Order. A business whose employees work outdoors and do not have regular contact with other people is engaged in Minimum Basic Operations.

Social Distancing Measures Shall Include the Following (20 Requirements):

1. Screening and evaluating workers who exhibit signs of illness, such as a fever over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, cough, or shortness of breath;
2. Requiring workers who exhibit signs of illness to not report to work or to seek medical attention;
3. Enhancing sanitation of the workplace as appropriate;
4. Requiring hand washing or sanitation by workers at appropriate places within the business location;
5. Providing personal protective equipment as available and appropriate to the function and location of the worker within the business location;
6. Prohibiting gatherings of workers during working hours;
7. Permitting workers to take breaks and meals outside, in their office or personal workspace, or in such other areas where proper social distancing is attainable;
8. Implementing teleworking for all possible workers;
9. Implementing staggered shifts for all possible workers;
10. Holding all meetings and conferences virtually, wherever possible;
11. Delivering intangible services remotely wherever possible;
12. Discouraging workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment;
13. Prohibiting handshaking and other unnecessary person-to person contact in the workplace;
14. Placing notices that encourage hand hygiene at the entrance to the workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen;
15. Suspending the use of Personal Identification Number ("PIN") pads, PIN entry devices, electronic signature capture, and any other credit card receipt signature requirements to the extent such suspension is permitted by agreements with credit card companies and credit agencies;
16. Enforcing social distancing of non-cohabitating persons while present on such entity's leased or owned property;
17. For retailers and service providers, providing for alternative points of sale outside of buildings, including curbside pick-up or delivery of products and/or services if an alternative point of sale is permitted under Georgia law;
18. Increasing physical space between workers and customers;
19. Providing disinfectant and sanitation products for workers to clean their workspace, equipment, and tools;
20. Increasing physical space between workers' worksites to at least six (6) feet.

No Letter is Required:

A contractor does not need a letter from an employer or the government to prove that they fall into one the exceptions for Essential Services, Necessary Travel, Critical Infrastructure, or Minimum Basic Operations.

Resources:

- [Governor Kemp's Executive Order](#)
- [Shelter in Place Handout](#)
- [CDC: Guidance for Reducing Health Risks to Workers Handling Human Waste or Sewage](#)
- [CDC: Can COVID-19 virus spread through sewerage systems?](#)