

Coronavirus - Disposing of contaminated Coronavirus waste and SWP service disruption

Summary

- **As the Coronavirus situation develops, SWP will be promoting the Government guidance on disposal of potentially contaminated personal waste.**
- **We will also be highlighting initial service disruption due to contractor staffing levels, and the likelihood of further disruption in the coming weeks.**

The Government has issued specific advice on how anyone with symptoms of the Coronavirus should dispose of their personal waste such as tissues and disposable cleaning cloths.

The guidance is for anyone with symptoms, including those diagnosed with the infection who must remain at home until they are well. It also applies to people in households with someone showing symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus (a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature).

Personal waste, such as tissues and disposable cleaning cloths, should be stored securely in disposable rubbish bags. These should then be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within your home.

This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual rubbish outside your house, which will be collected as part of the usual fortnightly collections.

Other household waste can be disposed of as normal. Full guidance for people staying at home because of confirmed or possible infection can be found on the Government's website here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

This guidance is available on a dedicated SWP webpage www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus

We are already seeing some impacts on services, as contractor staff levels are affected.

- Cancellation of Garden Waste collection in Sedgemoor today (18.3.20). We are likely to experience further disruption to the garden waste service, and we're aware that this is the time of year when people are re-subscribing or subscribing for the first time. We're looking at a suitable way of making sure people paying for garden waste collections don't lose out and will provide further information when we have it.
- Suspension of new requests for bins, recycling boxes and food waste caddies – teams will endeavour to deliver those already ordered, but no new requests will be accepted for the time being.
- Suspension of collection of bulky waste from inside properties – a service that tends to be used by older people and involves staff entering people's homes. The standard bulky waste collection service continues at present.
- Pausing of the Slim My Waste, Feed My Face campaign, which has been successfully encouraging food waste recycling across the county - this is in anticipation of increased pressure on support staff and services. A decision on delivering the campaign to the remaining areas of Sedgemoor and West Somerset will be taken at a later date.
- Suspension of assistance in removing waste from vehicles at the County's 16 Recycling centres – in light of Government guidance around social distancing, staff at the centres will temporarily not be able to help people carry weighty or awkward items. We would ask the public to bear this in mind when using the centres in the coming weeks. Each site has allocated a drop-off area for bulky items which members of the public may use if they feel unable to deposit these in recycling bins. People are reminded to separate their recycling from their rubbish before bringing it to any site and make sure they follow the guidance on any rubbish potentially affected with Coronavirus.

Considerable continuity planning has been undertaken and SWP will be working closely with partners and contractors to keep disruption to a minimum. SWP are also engaging with neighbouring authorities to share learning and ensure consistent public messaging.

However, it is highly likely that there will be more significant and widespread disruption in the coming days and weeks. Services will be prioritised, ensuring public health remains at the forefront of our planning.

Publicity will be taking place later today to highlight all of the above. The latest information about impacts on services will be found on the dedicated page www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus

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