

COVID-19 VACCINE DISPOSAL GUIDELINES

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that COVID-19 vaccines should be treated as regulated medical waste in its disposal requirements from their [Identification, Disposal, and Reporting of COVID-19 Vaccine Wastage](#) notice. The CDC advises providers to waste COVID-19 vaccines in accordance with local regulations.

The State of Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) follows the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) guidance on proper medical waste disposal of wasted COVID-19 vaccine. Please see [PDF](#) for reference. The TCEQ and DSHS define medical waste as special waste from health care-related facilities ([25 TAC 1.132\(46\)](#) and [30 TAC 326.3\(23\)](#)), which includes: treated and untreated animal waste, bulk human blood and body fluids, microbiological waste, pathological waste, and sharps.

Following the TCEQ's guidance on disposal of COVID-19 medical waste, dispose of needles and associated vials in a clearly labeled sharps container, treating it as a contaminated biohazard container. Wipe down and sanitize work area. After disposing of vaccine, take off and dispose gloves, and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Additional information on local regulations for how to treat and dispose medical waste in Texas, can be found on TCEQ's website at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/covid-19/waste-disposal-guidance> or by emailing info@tceq.texas.gov.

If your facility participates in the Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) or Adult Safety Net (ASN) Programs, follow the guidance for vaccine loss provided in the [TVFC and ASN Program Provider Manual, Chapter 3 Section IV: Vaccine Loss](#).