

# What should I know about COVID-19 and septic systems?

## With the recent shortage of toilet paper, I've had to get a bit creative...

We get it, do what you need to do. But **do not flush paper towels, wipes (even those labeled “flushable”), or anything else besides toilet paper down the toilet!** All of these products will not break down properly in your septic system, meaning that they can clog your system and even cause system failure.

We respect creativity. Just DON'T FLUSH IT.



## Should I be worried about the virus passing through the septic system?

Since COVID-19 is new, it is still unknown how the viruses' concentration and survival rates act in untreated sewage. However, other coronaviruses can survive for some time in settled sewage. Therefore, the safest course of action is to assume COVID-19 can survive in sewage.

The good news? We're already used to handling raw sewage safely, to avoid contamination.

Coronavirus is in general susceptible to the same disinfection treatments as other viruses. For the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency list of disinfectant products qualified for use against COVID-19, please visit the following link:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

## I'm a service provider for septic systems. What should I know?

Guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) states there is no evidence that additional COVID-19-specific protection is needed for employees in wastewater management operations. OSHA and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urge onsite sewage system workers to continue to follow routine practices to prevent exposure to wastewater and disease prevention practices, such as:

- Use physical barriers to prevent exposure to splashes or sprays of wastewater.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE): eye protection (goggles, face mask, or face shield); liquid-repellant coveralls and gloves
- Be trained on how to properly put on, use, wear, take off, clean/disinfect, maintain, store, and dispose of PPE
- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after handling waste or sewage, before eating or drinking, and before and after using the toilet
- Avoid touching face, mouth, eyes, nose, and open sores and cuts while handling sewage
- Cover open sores, cuts, and wounds with clean dry bandages
- Do not chew tobacco or gum
- Remove work clothes before eating, and eat in designated areas
- Remove work clothes before leaving the worksite