



Managing Used PPE: Gloves, Wipes, and Masks

Please note: COVID-19 is reported to live on surfaces for an extended period of time*.

- As an aerosol, for up to 3 hours (e.g. sneezing, coughing, etc.)
- Clothing – several hours up to a day
- Up to 4 hours on copper
- Up to 24 hours on cardboard
- Up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel
- Up to 4 days on glass surfaces like a Smartphone

General health and safety:

1. Exercise physical distancing and wear a mask when required to interact with others.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and before eating or preparing food. (CDC)
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. (CDC)

With the emergence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the masks and gloves we wear to the store, the hand sanitizer bottle we keep handy, and the wipes we use incessantly, all belong in the trash and not on the ground.

Protect yourself and others and help stop the spread of COVID-19 by disposing of these items properly. Here are a few simple tips and practices to keep you, your family, and community safe.

1. **Reserve:** The more sophisticated masks, such as N95, should be reserved for medical personnel, front line responders, and essential workers. Individuals should craft face masks from materials they have at home that can be sanitized (washed in soap and water) and reused. Keeping your hands away from your face and hand washing following official guidelines is the best practice for individual protection and slowing the spread of the virus.
2. **Dispose:** Used masks, gloves, and wipes should NOT BE LITTERED, but disposed of in household or commercial trash containers. These items are not recyclable and should not be placed in recycling collection bins.
3. **How to dispose when a trash bin is not available:** Used masks, gloves, and wipes should be removed according to official guidelines, and placed into a disposal bag for transport or disposal in a trash container as soon as possible.
4. **Help keep workers, customers, and community safe:** Retailers are strongly encouraged to provide frequently serviced trash receptacles in highly accessible areas to prevent the littering of used masks, gloves, and wipes.

*According to a new study from National Institutes of Health, CDC, UCLA and Princeton University scientists in The New England Journal of Medicine. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>