**Information and Resources on COVID-19 and wastewater processes and biosolids**

Posted:3-20-2020, Virginia Biosolids Council  
<http://www.virginiabiosolids.com/covid-19/>

As COVID-19’s impact continues to escalate and anxiety rises, it can be difficult to know where to look for accurate information, specifically related to the functionality of existing municipal utility processes to protect public health and safety.

Municipal utility treatment processes are rigorous, the wastewater is subjected to physical, biological, and chemical processes during treatment before clean water is returned to local waters or recycled. The solids are separated and then treated further to federal and state standards so that they can then be land applied or recycled. It can be treated to Class B or Exceptional Quality (EQ) standards.

In 2008, *Survival of Coronaviruses in Water and Wastewater (Gundy, Gerba and Pepper)* was published following the SARS epidemic, and compared the survival of representative coronaviruses and poliovirus 1 in tap water and wastewater. The conclusion of this study indicated that “coronaviruses die off very rapidly in wastewater, with a 99.9% reduction in 2–3 days, which is comparable to the data on SARS-CoV survival (*Wang et al.*[***2005a***](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12560-008-9001-6#ref-CR18)*,*[***b***](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12560-008-9001-6#ref-CR19)).”

Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that “there is no evidence to date that COVID-19 virus has been transmitted via sewerage systems, with or without wastewater treatment.” Although this is theoretically possible, there is no evidence to suggest that this has occurred.

In essence, COVID-19 is a virus that is particularly susceptible to disinfection. While it has proven to be highly contagious, treatment processes and disinfectant methods already in place are expected to be effective when it comes to water, sewerage, and septic systems. According to the U.S. EPA’s Part 503 requirements and guidance, Class B and/or EQ biosolids are equally protective of public health and the environment, which is ensured additionally by management practices and regulations.

“Municipal wastewater treatment plants are essential to purify and return clean water to the environment, and are critical to protecting public health and safety. While COVID-19 is unsettling, we are confident the processes we have in place are fully protective of public health and safety,” said Jamie Heisig-Mitchell, Chief of Technical Services for Hampton Roads Sanitation District and President of the VBC, whose members include municipal treatment facilities and the companies that provide recycling and application services.

More information on COVID-19 can be found [**here**](https://www.wef.org/wef-waterblog/wef-waterblog/a-message-to-the-wef-community-about-coronavirus/), and [**here**](https://www.asdwa.org/covid19/).