

## Health, Safety, and Sorting Guidelines

The following is a summary of the primary procedural methods that should be employed to best ensure that safety and health is protected during the waste assessment:

- 1) **Potential Hazards.** The following hazards may be present during the waste assessment:
  - a. **Physical hazards**
    - i. Cuts and punctures from handling hazardous materials: hypodermic needles, broken glass, razor blades, aerosol cans, chemicals, biohazards, bottles of unknown/unlabeled substances, plastic bottles containing used syringes, and other hazardous materials
    - ii. Back injury
    - iii. Slipping and falling
    - iv. Heat stress and fatigue
    - v. Animal and/or insect bites
  - b. **Airborne contaminants**
    - i. Dust from solid waste
  - c. **Chemical hazards**
    - i. Liquid spills from containers
    - ii. Household and hazardous chemicals
  - d. **Biological hazards**
    - i. Household hazardous wastes
    - ii. Medical wastes and sharps
    - iii. Bloody rags or objects
    - iv. Hypodermic needles
    - v. Animal wastes
  - e. **Geographic Hazards**
    - i. Altitude sickness
    - ii. Sunburn
- 2) **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) “head-to-toe”.** All persons performing sorting tasks are requested to wear at a minimum:
  - a. Safety glasses (sunglasses will work)
  - b. Long-sleeved shirts
  - c. Long pants
  - d. Sturdy boots (steel-toed boots, if possible)
  - e. Sturdy work gloves
    - i. Nitrile liners to be worn underneath will be provided
  - f. A change of clothes and shoes
    - i. Bring a plastic bag for your dirty clothes
  - g. Sun protection (hats and sunblock)
    - i. We will be at altitude

Liquid hand sanitizer will be available. It is recommended that personnel change out of PPE shirt, pants and shoes at the sort site, bagging soiled clothing and shoes, before returning

to the vehicles to leave the site. Clothing and shoes should be laundered/cleaned appropriately.

**3) Safety features present at the site will include:**

- ◆ First aid kit
- ◆ Emergency eyewash
- ◆ Water for hydration

**4) Sort personnel are instructed to process refuse in this general manner:**

The waste will be removed from the dumpsters and placed on a protected surface (tarps covering the ground). Use rakes to spread loose refuse so that majority of individual materials/items are released from compacted piles. Remove clearly accessible items first. As each item picked up and moved to a sorting bin, always be attentive to potential existing hazards such as broken glass, sharp edges, needles, biohazards, etc. These hazardous items should be moved with a shovel to a specially designated containment bin. Once a loose refuse pile has been cleared of its recyclables, it should be shoveled into a garbage can, weighed as “residual”, and then dumped into the final landfill-bound dumpster.

Refuse that is contained in a garbage bag should be carefully moved (pick up only by loose edges -- do not hold against legs, arms, etc.) to a flat surface, and sliced open across its longest length with a utility knife so that contents are clearly visible. Look first to assess for the presence of hazards, before reaching in to pull recyclables. Opened edges of bag can be gripped and bags tipped in different directions to move items within the bag into better view and/or positioning for removal. Individual bags that have been cleared of recyclables can be carefully picked up by their edges so that residual remains inside, placed in garbage cans, weighed and dumped into the dumpster.

The goal is to move as many recyclable materials as possible from the refuse being surveyed, but with safety being the primary filter. Recyclable items that are heavily contaminated with food wastes; present in bags that contain human or animal wastes (i.e. diapers, feminine hygiene products, kitty litter); or mixed with suspected hazardous materials (unknown oils, chemicals, etc.) shall not be retrieved.

There will be one person dedicated to reading the scale and recording data, and ensuring that the process is documented by photographs. The sort “Coordinator” will provide initial sort method safety and process training to all personnel; guidance on specific questions regarding the proper segregation of recoverable items, and continual oversight of activities to ensure safety to participants.

**5) Key safety rules:**

- ◆ All waste sorting personnel should be in good physical condition and not be sensitive to odors and dust
- ◆ Do not open any containers found in the refuse sample
- ◆ Do not touch suspicious materials (including any materials with suspected biohazards (blood/body fluids staining, human/animal wastes, etc.); syringes; containers taped together; paraphernalia indicative of methamphetamine production –i.e. numerous

ammonia bottles, cold capsule containers, etc.); and other potentially hazardous materials (unknown oils, chemicals, etc.) Move these materials to the designated “hazardous/special waste” bin using a shovel

- ◆ If heavy, bulky objects need to be moved; lift correctly utilizing leg strength, and/or enlist assistance of “helpers”
- ◆ Take rest & refreshment breaks as needed (please stay hydrated), but no drinking or eating in sort area