

Until April 27, 2020, the sectors subject to reopening were added to the list of [Government services and other priority activities](#), which includes garbage collection and residual materials management.

In respect to residual materials management, here is the list of services that are deemed essential:

- Garbage collection and disposal services
- Recyclable material collection and sorting services
- Hazardous material collection and treatment services
- Organic material collection and treatment services, including emptying septic tanks
- Ecocentres and bulky item collections
- Construction, renovation and demolition (CRD) residue pickup and sorting services
- Biomedical waste collection and treatment services
- Pest control businesses (for bedbugs, rats and mice in particular)

All businesses that produce inputs or raw materials necessary for priority services and activities must maintain their activities accordingly, bearing in mind the directives from public health authorities.

As these guidelines are being issued, the continuation of priority activities should be managed in alignment with the following specific recommendations, which were developed in collaboration with the competent public health authorities. These could, however, evolve.

Instructions for citizens:

- If you wish to return your empty refundable containers, please note that deposit-return activities have resumed since June 8 everywhere in Quebec (except the Island of Montreal) and since June 22 for the Island of Montreal.
- The public is urged to cooperate so that these refundable containers do not end up in the garbage.
- People who use reusable bags for shopping must wash them frequently and take precautions to reduce the risk of contamination. Food safety tips apply.
- Postpone your trip to the ecocentre or any other drop-off point and in the meantime do not place the materials or products you had intended to drop off in the garbage.
- At home, used tissues, gloves, masks, wipes and other protective or cleaning products that are potentially contaminated must be placed in a sealed bag and then in a closed garbage container. Such materials must not be placed in the recycling bin or organic material bin.
- When outside the home, if you use tissues, gloves, masks, wipes or other protective or cleaning products, be sure to dispose of them in the nearby garbage after use or bring them back home for proper waste handling.
- The usual health measures apply as well as [health recommendations](#) for everyone to deal with the current situation.
- For the cleaning and disinfection of interior surfaces, please refer to the recommendations issued by the [Institut national de santé publique du Québec](#).

- After handling potentially contaminated objects from outside the home, such as mail, parcels, circulars and others, citizens should wash their hands in accordance with public health directives and avoid touching their face. Surfaces that have been in contact with these objects (counter, chair, etc.) should also be cleaned. Subsequently, cardboard boxes, envelopes, printed materials or any other containers or packaging can be placed in the recycling bin, depending on what is accepted by your municipality. In case of doubt, citizens can consult RECYC-QUÉBEC's mobile app, *Ça va où?*

Instructions for retailers in handling refundable containers:

- The full resumption of deposit-return activities at retailers resumed since June 8 everywhere in Quebec (except the Island of Montreal) and since June 22 for the Island of Montreal.
- Retailers must be sure to fully inform their employees about the health measures that need to be taken and provide them with the necessary equipment. Employees who handle containers must wear gloves, remove them carefully and wash their hands frequently. Surfaces and equipment must be frequently disinfected.
- Retailers can refer to the recommendations issued by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec [Recommandations intérimaires concernant les marchés d'alimentation et commerces essentiels](#) (in French only).

Instructions for material recycling facility operators:

- Adequate protective measures must be taken by sorting centre managers. Employees must wear gloves, a respiratory protective device (e.g., disposable half-mask with N95 filter), safety goggles and work coveralls. Employers must inform their employees about the health measures to take and make sure employees use adequate protective equipment correctly.
- Respiratory protective equipment must be used according to the [CNESST's recommendations](#) (in French only).
- Facilities served by the *Association paritaire pour la santé et la sécurité du travail* – municipal affairs sector ([APSAM](#)) should refer to that association for support to roll out suitable prevention measures. Business members of [Via Prévention](#) can refer to their association for the same matter. Other facilities can refer to the regional public health branch's [Réseau de santé publique en santé au travail](#) for the necessary sorting centre support.
- A [guide from the IRSST](#) (in French only) is also available online for the prevention of health and safety risks at sorting centres.
- With the necessary prevention measures in place, the risk of contamination remains low.
- Materials coming into a sorting centre do not need to be left to rest before being sorted.
- A Q&A document is also available [questions et réponses à l'intention des centres de tri et des organismes municipaux \(PDF, 315 Ko\)](#) (in French only).
- The fact sheet [Trier sans virus](#) (in French only) issued by Via Prévention also provides relevant information that can be referred to.

Instructions for construction, renovation and demolition (CRD) residue sorting centre operators:

- Adequate protective measures must be taken by CRD residue sorting centre operators. Employees must wear gloves, a respiratory protective device, safety goggles and work coveralls.
- Employers must inform their employees about the health measures to take and make sure employees use adequate protective equipment correctly.
- Occupational health resources are available through the public health branch in each region, to support businesses with the implementation of the necessary prevention measures.
- With the necessary prevention measures in place, the risk of contamination remains low.
- CRD sorting centre operators can refer to the recommendations issued by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec [Recommandations intérimaires concernant les travailleurs de la gestion des matières résiduelles](#) (in French only).

Instructions for municipal agencies in charge of collection (garbage, organic and recyclable materials):

- The risks remain low. Usual health and protective measures (e.g., wearing gloves) apply. Municipal agencies must inform their employees about the health measures to take and make sure employees use adequate protective equipment correctly.
- It is not necessary to provide specific instructions to citizens (e.g., place bins on the curb 24 hours before the collection).
- To simplify hand washing, wash stations should be set up. Soap and water is preferred, otherwise an alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be used after removing visible stains from your hands.
- In the event of flooding, waste management must be carried out under usual health and protective measures, especially for contaminated materials affected by mould.
- A Q&A document is also available [questions et réponses à l'intention des centres de tri et des organismes municipaux \(PDF, 315 Ko\)](#) (in French only).
- The fact sheet [Collecter sans virus](#) (in French only) issued by Via Prévention also provides relevant information that can be referred to.

Instructions for collection businesses (including bulky items and CRD residue), disposal sites and treatment facilities for organic materials, hazardous materials or biomedical waste:

- Adequate protective measures must be taken by employers, and teams should continue to work in pairs for collection services in order to minimize contacts with other people, taking into account the close proximity of employees during travelling rounds.
- Employers must inform their employees about the health measures to take and make sure employees use adequate protective equipment correctly. Employees must wear gloves, a respiratory protective device, safety goggles and work coveralls.
- Occupational health resources are available through the public health branch in each region, to support employers with the implementation of the necessary prevention measures.
- With the necessary prevention measures in place (hand washing and social distancing), the risk of contamination remains low.
- To simplify hand washing, wash stations should be set up. Soap and water is preferred, otherwise an alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be used after removing visible stains from your hands.
- For biomedical waste, companies must check with hospitals to see whether specific measures have been implemented.
- The fact sheet [Collecter sans virus](#) (in French only) issued by Via Prévention also provides relevant information that can be referred to.

Instructions for ecocentre operators:

- Adequate protective measures must be taken by ecocentre operators.
- Employers must inform their employees about the health measures to take and make sure employees use adequate protective equipment correctly.
- With the necessary prevention measures in place, the risk of contamination remains low.
- To simplify hand washing, wash stations should be set up. Soap and water is preferred, otherwise an alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be used after removing visible stains from your hands.
- To limit contact and respect physical distance, citizens should handle the materials and products they take to the ecocentre themselves, and the number of visitors present at the ecocentre at the same time should be controlled.

Instructions for garages:

- In order to protect the health of their workers and customers, garage owners are asked to follow the recommendations issued by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec [Recommandations intérimaires concernant les garages de mécanique](#) (in French only)

Instructions for organizations that collect, re-use and recycle clothing, textiles, furniture and other items

- Prevention and protection measures that can be applied involve prohibiting access to the facilities to people who present symptoms, social distancing, hand washing, respiratory etiquette as well as the cleaning of all frequently touched tools, equipment and surfaces.
- When physical distancing is not possible, certain adjustments can be made in order to limit the risk of transmission.
- If applicable, the number of customers inside the stores should be limited. If needed, a designated person outside the store should manage the waiting line.
- Items that have been touched by customers should be subject to a special treatment (ex.: placing clothing on hold, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects).
- Donations received should never be put up for sale immediately. Furniture and other objects should previously be cleaned and disinfected. Clothing and other textile items should only be displayed in the store after a 48-hour delay. In addition, customers should be encouraged to clean or wash their purchases once they return home.

You can also refer to the recommendations issued by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec [Recommandations intérimaires concernant les travailleurs de la gestion des matières résiduelles](#) (in French only)

It is the responsibility of every organization (business, municipality, retailer or other) to apply these recommendations and to produce a service continuity plan based on their own situation, especially to deal with employee absences.

RECYC-QUÉBEC and the Ministry of the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change will be monitoring changes in the situation and may update these instructions in the coming days. Our teams are still working to provide support to industry players and to share relevant information with the public.