

ASK THE TAC



Ask the TAC covers technical questions submitted to NASSCO's Technical Advisory Council. The TAC is comprised of five industry leaders, all representing different backgrounds and areas of expertise. To learn more about TAC members please visit nassco.org/technical-advisory-council.

If you have a technical question you would like to submit, please email TAC@nassco.org.



Are there any special precautions needed when cleaning sewer pipes during COVID-19?



Cleaning and inspecting sewers in this time of COVID-19 brings a new perspective to the hazards associated with working in and around wastewater. We know that the coronavirus exists in feces and wastewater, causing inspection and cleaning equipment to contact the virus. This emphasizes the need to use proper PPE to prevent worker contact with wastewater. Another point of emphasis is equipment cleaning and disinfection procedures.

Workers should wear latex gloves when handling cleaning and inspection equipment and, obviously, should never touch their faces while wearing gloves. Masks, eye protection and possibly face shields should be worn if splashing is possible. Disposable suits can be used to protect clothes and prevent contamination.

Flushing operations may cause water spray containing coronavirus, so workers should take extra precautions to prevent inhalation of the vapor or allowing the vapor to enter workers' eyes, noses or open wounds. Face shields may be appropriate for these situations. Workers need respiratory protection when performing or while present for aerosol-generating procedures.

Clean with soap and water (do not use compressed air or water sprays to clean potentially contaminated surfaces, as these techniques may aerosolize infectious material) and disinfect cameras, cables, hoses and nozzles more frequently. Cameras are typically hosed off after every run to remove debris. Remove excess water from the cable or hose when returning to the reel. This can prevent pooling of contaminated water inside the truck. Periodic disinfection of the hose, cable and controls may be needed as well to help keep workers safe. Visit nassco.org/covid-19-support to learn more.