

Virus can spread through sewage systems: CPCB

Pollution body advises sewage treatment plant operators to use PPEs

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CAN COVID-19 spread through sewerage systems? The guidelines issued by the country's top pollution watchdog say transmission to operators may be possible during treatment of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) and has called for use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Issued by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Guidelines for Handling, Treatment and Disposal of Waste Generated during Treatment/Diagnosis/Quarantine of COVID-19 Patients also says that there is no evidence as of now that coronavirus spread through sewerage systems has occurred.

In Paris, French authorities

had found "minuscule traces" of coronavirus in non-potable water like water supply used for cleaning streets.

"As per the information available at CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention), the risk of transmission of virus that causes COVID-19 through sewerage systems is thought to be low. Transmission to operators may be possible during treatment of STPs," said the guidelines.

"Operators of Effluent Treatment Plants/Sewage Treatment Plants attached with discharge from Healthcare Facilities and isolation wards should adopt standard operational practices, practice basic hygiene precau-

tions, and should wear (PPE) — goggles, face mask, liquid repellent coveralls, waterproof gloves and rubber boots," the CPCB said adding, that during the period of COVID-19 pandemic, utilisation of treated wastewater in utilities within healthcare facilities may be avoided.

The guidelines talks about management of general waste from quarantine homes and masks/gloves from other households. It says used masks and gloves generated from home quarantine or other households should be kept in paper bags for a minimum of 72 hours prior to disposal as general waste. Users are advised to cut the masks prior to disposal to prevent reuse.

