



NATIONAL WILDLIFE CONTROL OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

COMPETENCE • INTEGRITY • SERVICE

The National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) has been made aware of concerns regarding transfer of COVID-19 from humans to bat populations. NWCOA, its members, and certified operators all recognize the ecological benefits of a healthy bat population. Our certification programs and training opportunities encourage wildlife control operators to always use personal protective equipment (PPE) and stringent sanitation protocols for not only their own protection, but to prevent the spread of White-nose Syndrome (WNS). At this time, it is imperative that anyone working in close proximity with bats utilize proper PPE to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 to bat populations. NWCOA recommends the following protocols for proper PPE:

- Washable or disposable coveralls or a change of clothing and footwear should be used to prevent movement of pathogens between sites. Bag non-disposable equipment before transport and then decontaminate following WNS guidelines.
- A face mask should be worn to block or minimize the exchange of respiratory droplets.
 - An N-95 respirator is ideal. Dispose of filters after each job and decontaminate respirator following WNS guidelines.
- Disposable or reusable gloves that can be decontaminated per White-nose Syndrome protocol should be used when working around roost sites to prevent the spread of pathogens between humans and animals or vice versa.
- If you must directly handle a bat, bite proof gloves must be cleaned following WNS decontamination protocols.
- Dispose of vacuum bags after each guano mitigation project and clean hard-surfaced unit, hose and nozzle following WNS decontamination guidelines.
- Decontaminate lights, headlamps and other cursory items used to illuminate the work area in an attic or interior space.
- Dispose of any drop clothes following each guano mitigation project.

NWCOA believes that an abundance of caution should be exercised until further notice. We believe that wildlife control operators with proper training should continue to provide bat exclusion and removal projects to prevent human exposure to rabies and other zoonotics. Unless absolutely necessary, operators should refrain from entering roosting sites during inspection, especially during the maternal season.

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