Municipal waste management and covid-19

1. Has waste management been classed as an essential service in your country?
Yes. There is a Federal Decree from March 20th, listing waste management as an essential services.

2. How many workers are affected by the current situation / are you operating with a reduced workforce?
We don’t have specific numbers, but in general waste operators decided to lay-off workers from the risk groups (elder people and persons with diseases). Up to now there aren’t COVID-19 cases among those workers. And operations weren’t affected in general terms.

- What special measures have you taken to enable operations to continue with a reduced workforce?
The workforce has not been reduced.
- What extra health and safety precautions have you taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your waste workforce?
Several measures have been implemented, and the main ones were: Elaboration of a contingency plan for all operations; intensified personal hygiene instructions and measures; distributed hand sanitizers in all waste operations units and vehicles; disinfection of the vehicles’ cabins before and after each working cycle; creation of direct contact channels to deal with doubts from workers and related families about Covid-19.
- Have you / will you, scale back your waste collection frequency?
Collection is an essential service and cannot be affected.

3. How is your system coping with the increase in face masks and other PPE in household waste?
The general perception is that there is a clear increase but there aren’t enough evidences about the amounts.

- Do face masks continue to go into residual waste, or have you introduced any special measures for the separate collection of face masks?
There aren’t special measures. The clear guidance to people is: don’t put it into the recycling bin in any case.
• Have you made any special communications to the general public, for example, do you ask them to make fewer trips to the recycling stations, or to avoid trips to the tips/drop-off centres to get rid of bulky waste items?
  Several municipalities have done so. Sao Paulo, for example, have installed sound equipments in several collection trucks that go around the city delivering messages to the citizens.

• Are people being given special instructions on how to deal with possibly contaminated waste?
  Yes, to use double bagging (one inside another) before delivering waste to be collected.

4. Do recycling centres remain open to the general public?
  In general recycling centers have been closed to comply with social distancing measures.

5. Have the international travel restrictions caused any interruptions with sending waste for processing overseas, importing/exporting waste?
  How are you managing the waste you cannot ship overseas?
  Brazilian laws forbid waste to be transferred overseas.

6. Are you incinerating (if capacity exists) more MSW than previously
  There aren’t MSW WtE plants operating in Brazil.