

MEDICAL WASTES DISPOSAL

I. CATEGORIES OF REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE

- Designate the following as major categories of medical waste that require special handling and disposal precautions: 1) microbiology laboratory wastes [e.g., cultures and stocks of microorganisms]; 2) bulk blood, blood products, blood, and bloody body fluid specimens; 3) pathology and anatomy waste; and 4) sharps [e.g., needles and scalpels].
- Consult federal, state, and local regulations to determine if other waste items are considered regulated medical wastes.

II. DISPOSAL PLAN FOR REGULATED MEDICAL WASTES

- Develop a plan for the collection, handling, predisposal treatment, and terminal disposal of regulated medical wastes.
- Designate a person or persons as responsible for establishing, monitoring, reviewing, and administering the plan.

III. HANDLING, TRANSPORTING, AND STORING REGULATED MEDICAL WASTES

- Inform personnel involved in handling and disposal of potentially infective waste of possible health and safety hazards; ensure that they are trained in appropriate handling and disposal methods.
- Manage the handling and disposal of regulated medical wastes generated in isolation areas by using the same methods used for regulated medical wastes from other patient-care areas.
- Use proper sharps disposal strategies.
 1. Use a sharps container capable of maintaining its impermeability after waste treatment to avoid subsequent physical injuries during final disposal.
 2. Place disposable syringes with needles, including sterile sharps that are being discarded, scalpel blades, and other sharp items into puncture-resistant containers located as close as practical to the point of use.
 3. Do not bend, recap, or break used syringe needles before discarding them into a container.
- Store regulated medical wastes awaiting treatment in a properly ventilated area inaccessible to vertebrate pests; use waste containers that prevent development of noxious odors.
- If treatment options are not available at the site where the medical waste is generated, transport regulated medical wastes in closed, impervious containers to the on-site treatment location or to another facility for treatment as appropriate.

IV. TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL OF REGULATED MEDICAL WASTES

- Treat regulated medical wastes by using a method (e.g., steam sterilization, incineration, interment, or an alternative treatment technology) approved by the appropriate authority having jurisdiction.
- Follow precautions for treating microbiologic wastes (e.g., amplified cultures and stocks of microorganisms).
 1. Biosafety level 4 laboratories must inactivate microbiologic wastes in the laboratory by using an approved inactivation method (e.g., autoclaving) before transport to and disposal in a sanitary landfill.
 2. Biosafety level 3 laboratories must inactivate microbiologic wastes in the laboratory by using an approved inactivation method (e.g., autoclaving) or incinerate them at the facility before transport to and disposal in a sanitary landfill.
- Biosafety levels 1 and 2 laboratories should develop strategies to inactivate amplified microbial cultures and stocks onsite by using an approved inactivation method (e.g., autoclaving) instead of packaging and shipping untreated wastes to an offsite facility for treatment and disposal.
- Laboratories that isolate select agents from clinical specimens must comply with federal regulations for receipt, transfer, management, and appropriate disposal of these agents.
- Sanitary sewers may be used for safe disposal of blood, suctioned fluids, ground tissues, excretions, and secretions, provided that local sewage discharge requirements are met and that the state has declared this to be an acceptable method of disposal.

References:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm>