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Medical Waste Stream Management



This computer-based learning module provides information to Sharp HealthCare employees regarding the various medical waste streams including the segregation and disposal of discarded medications.



Introduction

Course Content

This computer-based learning module examines the:

- Types of waste encountered in a patient care environment.
- Types of waste disposal containers used in the patient care area.
- Labeling requirements for each type of waste disposal container.

Regular Solid Waste

Examples of regular solid waste:

Non-contaminated (blood, body fluid, medications):

- Non-confidential paper
- Plastic
- Unbroken glass products
- Empty IV bags



Disposal of regular solid waste:

Municipal solid (or regular) waste.

Note: Liquids that are **not** classified as hazardous shall be disposed down the drain (Non-hazardous liquids are not allowed in regular solid waste trash). Labels, paperwork or anything with patient identifying information should be rendered unreadable before being placed into regular trash.

Sharps Waste

Examples of sharps waste:

- Any item capable of piercing or puncturing skin
- Ampules (opened without any residual meds)
- Disposable sharp instruments
- Glass pipettes/slides
- Lancets
- Needles/syringes with or without attached needle or needle safety device
- Razor blades
- Scalpel blades

Note: Uncontaminated syringes (without needles) can be disposed of in either the regular trash or sharps containers.

Sharps Waste continued.....

Disposal of sharps waste:

All sharps waste must be placed in a sharps container labeled with the words “Sharps Waste” or with this symbol and your facility’s name,



address, and telephone number or electronic tracking system (e.g. bar code). **Note:** Sharps waste does **NOT** include chemotherapy-contaminated items or syringes with needles containing drugs.

Biohazardous Waste

Examples of biohazardous waste:

Biohazardous waste includes disposable items contaminated with liquid or saturated blood and/or infectious body fluids.

Biohazardous waste includes:

- Blood in tubing or syringes without needles
- Containers of blood or body fluids
- Saturated or caked (with blood or body fluids) dressings and pads
- Biohazardous bags



Click [hotwords](#) to view definitions.

Biohazardous Waste continued.....

Disposal of biohazardous waste:

- All red bags used to collect biohazardous waste are labeled with the words “Biohazardous Waste” or with this symbol:
- These bags are also labeled with your facility’s name, address, and phone number or electronic tracking system (e.g. barcode).
- Biohazardous waste is then disposed of in a biohazardous waste container lined with a red plastic bag and covered with a lid.



Note: Items such as tissue specimens and pharmaceutical waste are **not** included in biohazardous waste.

Pathology Waste

Pathology waste includes human surgery specimens or tissues. The pathology waste container shall be labeled with:

- Your facility's name, address and phone number.
- The phrases "Pathological Waste" or "Path" on the lid and on the sides.

Trace Chemotherapy Waste

Trace chemotherapy waste consists of materials involved in the preparation and administration of chemotherapy drugs that do **not** contain liquid or powder in an amount that can be scraped or poured.

Examples of trace chemotherapy waste:

- Ampules
- Gloves
- Gowns
- IV bags
- Pads
- Syringes
- Tubing
- Empty chemotherapy vials

Trace Chemotherapy Waste continued.....

Disposal of trace chemotherapy waste:

These items are placed in a yellow, leak-proof and puncture-resistant container with a tight fitting lid.

The container is labeled with:

- Your facility's name, address, and phone number.
- The phrases "*Chemotherapy Waste*" or "*Chemo*" on the lid and on the sides.



Bulk Chemotherapy Waste

Bulk chemotherapy waste includes chemotherapy containers containing an amount of chemotherapy that **CAN** be poured or scraped.

Examples of bulk chemotherapy waste:

- Discarded chemotherapy.
- Chest tube chemotherapy drainage.
- Intraperitoneal drainage known to contain chemotherapy.
- Material used to clean up a spill involving a chemotherapy agent.

Bulk Chemotherapy Waste continued.....

Disposal of bulk chemotherapy waste:

Items are placed in a white, leak-proof and puncture-resistant container with a tight fitting lid. Information on this container must have a biohazardous waste label and include:

- Facility Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identification number.
- Label with your facility's name, address, and telephone number.
- Large yellow label affixed to the container stating *Hazardous Waste, State and Federal Law Prohibits Improper Disposal* and *Properties/Description: Chemotherapy Waste*.
- The accumulation start date.



Total accumulation period per container may not exceed 90 day for a facility classified as a large quantity generator or 180 days for a small quantity generator in the central storage waste area. Click [hotwords](#) to view definitions.

Pharmaceutical Waste

Examples of pharmaceutical waste:

Pharmaceutical waste consists of partial, damaged, contaminated, or unwanted medications such as:

- Antibiotics
- Botox
- Duragesic patches
- Half tablets
- Expired or unusable parenteral/oral liquids
- Dextrose saline I.V. admixtures containing meds such as dobutamine/epinephrine, magnesium sulfate.
- Over-the-counter medications
- Partial tubes of ointments
- Propofol

Note: Unused/unspiked IVs should be returned to the pharmacy for credit.

Pharmaceutical Waste continued.....

Disposal of pharmaceutical waste:

These items are placed in a leak-proof, puncture-resistant white container with blue/purple lid for disposal. Information on this container must include:

- Your facility's name, address, and phone number or electronic tracking systems (e.g. barcode).
- The phrase *Incinerate Only* on all sides and including the lid of the container.



Note: Controlled Substances must not be disposed of in these pharmaceutical waste containers.



Pharmaceutical Waste continued.....

Before placing items in pharmaceutical waste containers, make sure they are NOT listed in the Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste section.

Refer to the “*Sharp HealthCare Pharmaceutical Waste Stream Summary Chart*” and “*Pharmaceutical Waste Management*” Policy & Procedure (#18306.99) for specific information on hazardous pharmaceutical Waste disposal.

Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste

Dispose of hazardous pharmaceutical concentrate waste by returning to Pharmacy

Examples of hazardous pharmaceutical waste:

- Ampules/vials of undiluted epinephrine or nitroglycerin
- Pourable flammables (>24%) such as rubbing alcohol, tinctures and flexible colloidion
- Warfarin and its packaging
- Silver Nitrate
- Insulin m-cresol



Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste continued.....

Items **NOT** included in hazardous pharmaceutical waste include:

- Bulk chemotherapy
- Sharps
- Nitroglycerine drips
- Epinephrine drips
- Epi-cal drips
- Alcoholic liquids containing less than 24% alcohol

Expired Unusable Pharmaceutical Waste

Examples of expired and unusable pharmaceuticals include:

Intact expired or unusable medications including controlled substances.

Disposal:

Return items to Pharmacy.

Recycling

Blue recycling containers are used for recyclable glass, metals, plastic and non-confidential paper.

Recycling is required by city ordinances.



Recycling

These items can be recycled:

- Mixed Paper and Cardboard
- Cardboard boxes
- File folders
- Junk Mail
- Magazines
- Telephone Books
- Non-confidential paper
- Paper bags
- Paper or frozen food boxes
- Empty Recyclable Containers
- Aluminum Cans
- Plastic Bottles and Jars
- Glass Bottles and Jars
- Clean Plastic Food Packaging (non compostable plastics, Styrofoam, or Utensils)
- Metal Cans



Recycling

These items can not be recycled:

- Gloves
- Paper Towels
- Containers with food or liquid
- Plastic grocery bags
- Wax-coated containers such as milk cartons

Note: Batteries, electronic waste, fluorescent light bulbs are recycled into different waste streams. Please contact your safety officer if you have questions.