



Guide for Medical Waste Act

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INTRODUCTION

- ▶ The Medical Waste Management Act regulates the handling, transport, and disposal of medical waste (biohazardous waste). The Act is intended to protect the public from illness or injury associated with medical waste (including sharps). In addition to healthcare workers, the Act protects housekeeping and custodial staff, as well as sanitation workers. The non-healthcare workers are particularly vulnerable as they can be exposed to unsuspected hazardous items if medical waste gets into the waste stream. Inspections associated with the enforcement of the Act are intended to ensure the applicable standards are met. The types of businesses that commonly generate medical waste include hospitals, medical or dental offices, infirmaries, clinics, veterinarians, nursing facilities, teaching institutions, laboratories, and bioresearch facilities.

DEFINITIONS

- ▶ **Medical Waste**—is generated as a result of diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of humans or animals; and meets the definition of biohazardous and/or sharps waste. Also includes trauma scene waste.
- ▶ **Biohazardous Waste**—includes, but is not limited to, laboratory waste, microbiology specimens, surgery specimens, infectious animal parts, waste with recognizable fluid blood, and infectious excreta or secretions from humans.
- ▶ **Sharps Waste**—a device that has acute rigid corners, edges, or protuberances capable of cutting or piercing, which includes, but is not limited to, hypodermic needles, hypodermic needles with syringes, blades, needles with attached tubing, syringes contaminated with biohazardous waste, acupuncture needles, root canal files and broken glass. Broken glass can include that from Pasteur pipettes blood vials, or other glassware contaminated with biohazardous waste.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

- ▶ Medical waste generators must have a valid permit from FHOc
- ▶ All biohazardous waste is to be placed in a red biohazard bag properly labeled with the words “Biohazardous Waste” or with the word “BIOHAZARD.”
- ▶ Medical waste must be contained separately from other waste and placed for storage, handling, or transport in a properly labeled rigid container. The container must be leak resistant and have a tight-fitting lid.
- ▶ Sharps waste is to be disposed in a properly sealed and labeled sharps container.
- ▶ Medical waste must be collected by a registered hauler every 7 days unless the facility generates less than 20 pounds per month (in this case, the waste may be stored up to 30 days with FHOc approval).
- ▶ A designated accumulation area should be secure to deny access to unauthorized persons. The area should also be protected from animals, natural elements, and vermin harborage.
- ▶ Maintain for at least 3 years the tracking documents from your registered medical waste hauler.
- ▶ Maintain treatment records if on-site treatment of medical waste is conducted.
- ▶ Generators are subject to routine unannounced inspections.