



Clinical Waste Safe Working Practices

WHAT IS CLINICAL WASTE?

Any waste which consists wholly or partly of:

- human or animal tissue;
- blood or other body fluids;
- excretions;
- drugs or other pharmaceutical products;
- swabs or dressings;
- syringes, needles or other sharp instruments;

which unless rendered safe may prove hazardous to any person coming into contact with it.

Clinical Waste is divided into 5 groups

Waste Group	Type of Clinical Waste
Group A	Includes the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifiable human tissue, – blood, – animal carcasses and tissue from veterinary centres, hospitals or laboratories. – Soiled surgical dressings, – swabs and other similar soiled waste. – Other waste materials, for example from infectious disease cases, excluding any in Groups B-E.
Group B	Includes the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Discarded syringe needles, – cartridges, – broken glass and – any other contaminated disposable sharp instruments or items.
Group C	Includes the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Microbiological cultures and potentially infected waste from pathology departments and other clinical or research laboratories.
Group D	Includes the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Drugs or other pharmaceutical products
Group E	Includes the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Items used to dispose of urine, – faeces and other bodily secretions or excretions which do not fall within Group A. – This includes used disposable bed pans or bed pan liners, – incontinence pads, – stoma bags, – and urine containers.

CLINICAL WASTE CONTAINERS

Shall be capable of containing the waste without spillage. If they are intended for re-use they should be capable of being suitably cleaned and, where required, disinfected. The lid of the container should be capable of being operated without lifting it by hand, i.e. by foot pedal, and shall close securely.

CLINICAL WASTE BAGS

Waste bags conforming to the appropriate standard should only be used having been approved to the relevant UN standard. (Special clinical waste bags – yellow)

HANDLING (prior to collection and disposal)

- Locate clinical waste container in suitable area.
- Before inserting yellow bag to line the container, affix complete label identifying the school, section or department and current date.
- Insert yellow bag to line container.
- Only dispose of clinical wastes as defined in this way.
- When the bag is approximately 2/3 full, exchange for empty bag.
- Seal the bag as follows:
 - gather top of the bag;
 - fold the neck of the bag over;
 - tie the neck by forming a loop and passing the end through the loop creating a knot;
 - tighten the knot to ensure an effective seal.
 - Ensure label is still attached.
- Ensure that clinical waste bag is stored separately from other waste in a secure environment.
- Arrange for a licensed clinical waste contractor to collect the waste for disposal preferably at regular intervals.

Used needles should be placed in a special yellow, plastic, sharps container and disposed of via a licensed contractor.

CLEANING BODY FLUID SPILLS

When dealing with spillages of blood or body fluids, it is very important to ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using hypochlorite. Glutaraldehyde must not be used.

The use of disinfectants themselves may present a health risk, particularly in confined spaces. COSHH applies to such risks and appropriate precautions must be specified, based on risk assessment. Any spillage of body fluid must be cleaned up immediately. Wear gloves and a disposable plastic apron. Pour bleach (10,000 ppm), or a suitable substitute (Disinfectant/biocide), on to paper towels placed over the spill. Wipe up the spill, and then wipe over the disinfected area with bleach (10,000 ppm), or suitable substitute. If possible, leave for five minutes contact time before washing the area with hot water and detergent.

PPE (personal protective equipment) in the form of disposable gloves and apron should be worn.

Complete an Accident/Occurrence report form.

COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this guidance note clinical waste is considered to be any waste arising from medical, nursing, dental, veterinary, pharmaceutical or similar practice, investigation, treatment, care, teaching or research which by nature of its toxic, infectious or dangerous content may prove a hazard or give offence unless previously rendered safe and inoffensive.

Such waste includes human or animal tissue or excretions, drugs and medicinal products, swabs and dressing, instruments or similar substances and materials.

This procedure has been designed to ensure that all persons who may come into contact with clinical waste by reason of their day-to-day duties understand the risks involved and the correct method to be adopted in the collection and disposal.

HAZARDS

In addition to the normal hazards associated with household and trade refuse there is, with clinical waste, the potential risk of infection from accidental inoculation from needles, phials, broken glass containers, sharp instruments or by it coming into direct contact with open wounds and sores. All personnel involved in clinical waste collection should receive tetanus, typhoid and poliomyelitis vaccination.

SEGREGATION AND STORAGE

Clinical waste should be segregated from all other types of refuse. It must be stored for collection in the appropriate coloured plastic bag which must be effectively and securely tied. All used syringes, needles, or other sharp instruments must be placed in closed containers for collection.

For the purpose of identification plastic bags should be colour coded as followed:-

Yellow - Waste destined for incineration only.

Yellow with a black band - Waste which preferably should be disposed of by incineration but may be disposed of by landfill.

Light blue or transparent with light blue inscription - Waste for autoclaving (or equivalent treatment) before disposal.

HANDLING OF CLINICAL WASTE

All personnel who may be required to move bagged clinical waste by hand must:-

- wear the appropriate protective clothing issued to them;
- check that storage bags are effectively sealed and undamaged. When broken bags are discovered they must be left on site and the proprietor of the establishment contacted with a request for the bags to be resealed;
- the bags should be handled at the neck only;

- any accidental spillages should be cleared using the equipment provided on the vehicle, i.e. a shovel and broom.

DISPOSAL

Sharps containers - contact Aspen Way for collection and disposal.

If handling and/or disposing of Clinical Waste, Contracting Division at Aspen Way should be contacted for advice as the handling and disposal of such waste should be carried out in accordance with their Clinical Waste Collection Safe Working Practice.

ACCIDENTS

All accidents resulting in personal injury must be recorded in the accident book. An accident report must be then completed and submitted to the first line supervisor (see Accident Reports).

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

It is not necessary for specialist protective clothing to be made available. Standard issue overall and a heavy duty pair of leather gloves is adequate.

If for any reason clothing should become contaminated, it should be segregated from normal work clothing but can then be laundered in the normal manner.

HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

The collection vehicle must carry a supply of warm water, soap and disposable wipes/towels. Face and hands should always be washed before partaking of any food.