Section E.2
University of South Carolina Health and Safety Guide
INFECTIOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

Introduction

All biologically-contaminated waste materials and non-contaminated "medical-like" waste materials (such as needles and syringes) are handled separately from the general waste stream. These wastes are not accepted by the landfill to which the University sends its general wastes. South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control regulates Infectious Waste under regulation R.61-105.

Scope and Application

The procedures described in this section apply to all biologically-contaminated wastes, biologically-non-contaminated medical-like materials that could be perceived as infectious generated from University facilities.

Sharps
Sharps should be disposed of into puncture-resistant, closable, leak proof, labeled, or color-coded containers. Sharps containers should be easily accessible to personnel and located as close as feasible to the work area. Containers should remain upright and not overfilled. Used needles shall not be recapped or sheared, and be deposited whole into the appropriate sharps containers. The following items should always be placed in approved sharps containers. They should never be placed in biohazardous waste containers.

- Ampules
- Butterfly Units
- Capillary Pipettes
- Capillary Tubes
- Cover Slips
- Microscopy slides
- Microtome Blades
- Scallops
- Razor Blades
- Pasteur Pipettes
- Needles (contaminated)
- Needles (noncontaminated)

Cultures
All human pathogen cultures must be steam sterilized before placing in the medical waste boxes. Chemical decontamination in 1:10 bleach solution or equivalent is an acceptable alternative to steam sterilization provided that fresh solutions are maintained for that purpose.
Regulated Waste
All contaminated or potentially contaminated materials will be placed in biohazard bags/containers that are closable, leak proof, labeled, or color-coded. This waste should be closed prior to removal. If any container becomes contaminated, it shall be placed in a secondary container meeting the same standards. Call the EHS 777-5269 for proper disposal. Only waste designated as "biohazardous" should be put into designated biohazardous waste containers.

Waste Always Considered Biohazardous
- Any waste that is grossly soiled with human blood or other potentially infectious materials.
  Specific examples of biohazardous waste items generated
  - Attenuated vaccines
  - Band-Aids
  - Body fluids
  - Cultures and stock of infectious agents
  - Discarded vaccines
  - Contaminated disposable culture dishes
  - Disposable thermometer tips
  - Soiled dressings and sponges
  - Exam table paper, which is soiled with human blood
  - PPE (such as gloves, gowns, face protection, etc.) contaminated with human blood

Procedure
Infectious waste is picked up by EHS from various sites around the Columbia Campus on a weekly basis. Standard medical waste boxes are provided by EHS (call 777-5269) which includes a red plastic bag liner. All medical waste must be packed in these lined boxes. The boxes must be packed in such a way as to not leak or exceeded 45 lbs. The bottom and top of the box must be taped securely. Infectious waste generated at the School of Medicine will be autoclaved in the department generating the waste. The autoclaved waste will be package in biological waste boxes lined with red bags. The boxes will be sealed and taken to the animal resources facility for shipment on Wednesday mornings.

Roles and Responsibilities

Laboratory Manager/Supervisor
• Ensure that all individuals generating waste are aware of and follow the prescribed waste disposal procedures.

EHS
• Pick up properly sealed boxes of medical waste
• Provide consultation and advice on medical waste handling and issues of regulatory compliance.
• Provide medical waste boxes upon request.

Individual
• Handle waste categories as described above.

For More Information
• Contact the Infectious Waste Manager at 777-5269.
• The following references are available through EHS:
• South Carolina Infectious Waste Management Regulations R.61-105