

University of Alaska Anchorage	Section EHS/RMS
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANUAL	Part Procedure
Policies and Procedures	Statement 14
Title <i>DISPOSAL OF MEDICAL AND INFECTIOUS WASTE</i>	Effective Date 09/12/08

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for disposing of medical and infectious waste. Adherence to the procedure will provide compliance with municipal, state, and federal regulations and protect students, employees, and contractors from exposure to disease causing organisms.

Definitions

Code defines medical and infectious wastes as any material for disposal that has been exposed to or is reasonably suspected to have been exposed to contagious diseases. Medical and infectious wastes also include materials exposed to human body fluids as defined in [the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard](#), EHS/RMS Policy 17.

Material that may be perceived by the public as being infectious should also be treated as medical and infectious waste. Examples include unused or noninfectious discarded sharps (needles, syringes, lancets, pipettes, scalpel. blades, blood vials, slides, cover slips, etc.). Although these items present little or no public health threat, they should be managed in accordance with this procedure because they are indistinguishable from potentially infectious sharps.

Sterilization

Medical and infectious wastes must be stored in approved containers and sterilized promptly. Metal and glass objects may be effectively sterilized in a pressurized autoclave. The containers used in the autoclave process should be compatible with the manufacturers' specifications. Use autoclave tape or other acceptable indicators to verify sterilization.

Alternative methods of sterilization are appropriate for other materials. A private contractor may be retained to incinerate combustible items. Gauze, cotton, balls, disposable aprons, lab coats or other cloth and paper items may be sterilized or disinfected by applying a solution of one part laundry bleach (sodium hypochlorite aqueous solution) and nine parts water. Soaking these items in the bleach solution overnight will not only disinfect but also remove or obscure traces of blood contamination. Drain

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the excess solution into a sanitary sewer drain and place the disinfected material in appropriately labeled plastic bags.

Labeling

Sterilized waste must be clearly and indelibly relabeled as “rendered noninfectious by sterilization.” The relabeling should completely obscure any old biohazard or infectious waste labels.

Repackaging and Disposal

Repackage the sterilized and relabeled materials in containers for disposal by custodial services. Label these containers as “waste.” Custodial services will take the waste to the trash compactor for processing and transportation the municipal solid waste facility.

Sharps Packaging

Special packaging methods are necessary to enable custodians to safely dispose of sharps. After sterilization and relabeling, a slurry of plaster or other suitable solidification media must be mixed into the sharps container. Allow the mixture to harden. Follow the foregoing repackaging and relabeling steps. Note: the sterilization step may be avoided for uncontaminated sharps. Nevertheless, uncontaminated sharps must be solidified and labeled as “noninfectious material.”

Plastic and Glass Waste

Exceptions to the foregoing procedure may be approved for noninfectious plastic and glass waste (microscope slides, cover slips, and pipettes) generated in academic science programs. These items must be placed in broken glass containers and handled according to department procedures for disposing of noninfectious broken glass. **This exception does not apply to other types of sharps or any item that may be contaminated with infectious material.** Approval for this disposal method may be obtained from EHS/RMS at 786-1351 or ayssg@uaa.alaska.edu.

Contracted Disposal

Contractors may be retained by departments to dispose of medical and infectious wastes. If departments use a private contractor, safe and secure interim storage must be provided to prevent inadvertent exposure. Refer to the Bloodborne Pathogens Standards for guidelines.