

Home Generated Medical Waste

Private households also generate medical waste (e.g., syringes). CCEH does not regulate home-generated medical waste. The law prohibits the disposal of home-generated sharps into the garbage, so these must be properly disposed elsewhere. For information on home-generated medical waste or pharmaceutical disposal, visit the following websites to find out what items they accept and if there are any residency restrictions:

CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY
Home-Generated Sharps and Pharmaceutical Recycling:
recyclesmart.org/HHW

DELTA DIABLO SANITARY DISTRICT HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

2550 Pittsburg-Antioch Hwy
Pittsburg, CA 94565
925-756-1990
deltadiablo.org/services/hhw

MT. VIEW SANITARY DISTRICT

Sharps Drop Off Only
3800 Arthur Rd.
Martinez, CA 94553
925-228-5635

mvsd.org/residents-and-businesses/household-fyi/#sharps

WEST CONTRA COSTA HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

101 Pittsburg Avenue,
North Richmond, CA 94801
888-412-9277

recyclemore.com/content/local-hazardous-waste-collection-facility

WEST CONTRA COSTA SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY (RECYCLESMART):

recyclemore.com/content/safe-disposal-unwanted-medications

CALRECYCLE

Information on disposal sites including pharmaceuticals, sharps, and household hazardous waste:

calrecycle.ca.gov/FacIT/Facility/Search.aspx?ActivityID=41#LIST

OTHER RECYCLING FACILITIES

For a list of facilities that accept home-generated needles/sharps/syringes in Contra Costa County, visit the Department of Conservation and Development website:
cccounty.us/depart/cd/recycle/

Contact Information

AGENCIES

Contra Costa County Environmental Health
925-692-2500
2120 Diamond Blvd., Suite 200
Concord, CA 94520
cchealth.org/eh/

California Department of Public Health
Medical Waste Management Program
916-449-5671
cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/Pages/default.aspx



Contra Costa Environmental Health



MEDICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



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.

Contra Costa Environmental Health (CCEH) enforces the Medical Waste Management Act in Contra Costa County. CCEH staff conduct routine inspections, investigate complaints, and provide information to medical waste generators. 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.

Permit Application Process

Medical waste generators must obtain a permit from CCEH. Permit applications can be obtained online at cchealth.org/eh. The application process includes the following:

- Complete and submit a permit application along with applicable fees.
- Complete and submit a Medical Waste Management Plan (template form is available at the CCEH website).

Medical Waste Transportation

Transporters of medical waste must be registered with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) as a medical waste hauler. A list of approved medical waste transporters can be found at the CDPH website: cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/Pages/Transporters.aspx.

Facilities which generate less than 200 pounds of medical waste per month and facilities which transport less than 35 pounds of their own medical waste to an authorized facility may do so under a materials trade exemption.

General Requirements

STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

- Medical waste generators must have a valid permit from CCEH.
- 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 CCEH approval).
- A designated accumulation area should be secure so as 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.

ONSITE TREATMENT

A small number of facilities treat their medical waste. As a result of this treatment, infectious agents are eliminated. Steam sterilization is the primary method used for onsite treatment of medical waste. Once the medical waste is treated by an approved method, it ceases to be regulated under the Medical Waste Management Act and is classified as solid waste. Non-infectious sharps still pose a safety hazard; therefore, onsite treatment does not eliminate all risks. The CDPH, Medical Waste Management Branch, maintains a list of all alternative treatments approved for use in California: cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/Documents/MedicalWaste/2013/AltTechList.pdf. Please note that medical waste that has been treated so as to be non-infectious may be mistaken for untreated waste if it is placed in the regular garbage.