

MEDICAL WASTE POLICY & PROCEDURES

pub# BSU1

In 1990 the State of California enacted legislation requiring that medical waste be separated from other waste. Special procedures must be followed for disposal of sharps, biohazardous (red bag) waste and autoclaved waste.

Call your Department Safety Advisor (DSA) or the Biosafety Officer at 476-2097 for additional information or refer to a copy of the "UCSF Medical Waste Management Plan". The plan is available from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS).

Regulatory agencies and the public assume that anything that looks like medical waste is medical waste.

Liquid Biohazardous Waste

- ◆ Use a bleach mixture (final concentration of 1:10) for a minimum of 30 minutes to decontaminate infectious liquid waste. Decontaminated liquid biohazardous waste may be poured down a drain.
- ◆ Examples of liquid biohazardous waste include:
 - Vacuum traps.
 - Decanted tissue culture media.
 - Liquid microbial cultures.
 - Human blood, serum, etc.

Solid Biohazardous Waste

- ◆ Risk Group 1 (RG1) solid biohazardous waste can be disposed in regular garbage cans in the laboratory.
- ◆ Risk Group 2 (RG2) or Risk Group 3 (RG3) solid biohazardous waste must be segregated into **two groups** as follows:
 - ◆ **Group 1: Solid Pathological Waste** such as:
 - All waste from BSL3 facilities.
 - Animal tissue >1 cubic inch and animal carcasses.
 - Human tissue >1 cubic inch.
 - ◆ **Group 2: Other Biological Waste** such as:
 - Lab items or cultures known or strongly suspected to contain RG2 human pathogens.
 - Microbial cultures.
 - Diagnostic specimens.
 - Contaminated swabs, wipes, and towels.
 - Contaminated serological pipettes.
 - Tissue culture flasks and bottles.
- ◆ **PLEASE NOTE:** Pathological and other biological waste must be stored in separate, labeled waste containers.

Disposal of red bag waste

- ◆ Approved red bags are available through scientific equipment vendors.
- ◆ Red bags must be placed in a hard-sided container with a tight-fitted lid. Lid must be in place when container is not in active use.
- ◆ Biohazardous waste container must have biohazard labels on all sides and on the lid:



- ◆ Do not overfill red bags.
- ◆ Use good judgment in filling red bags so that when filled, red bags can be securely fastened and then transported without tearing or leaking. If necessary, double bag to prevent leakage.
- ◆ Do not put unautoclaved red bags in the regular trash.
- ◆ Contact OEH&S for removal of full red bags.

What must NOT go into the red bag?

- ◆ Sharps such as needles, syringes with needles, scalpels, razors or Pasteur pipettes.
- ◆ Chemical or radioactive waste.
- ◆ Mixed chemical waste, that is biological-chemical waste (which must be treated as chemical waste) and biological-radioactive (which must be treated as radioactive waste).
- ◆ Regular trash such as uncontaminated paper.

REMEMBER: UNAUTOCLAVED MICROBIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS MUST NOT GO INTO THE REGULAR TRASH! IF YOU SEE IMPROPERLY DISPOSED SHARPS CONTAINERS AND RED BAGS CALL THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OEH&S) AT 476-1300.

Autoclaved waste disposal

Autoclaved waste may be disposed of in the regular trash only under the following conditions:

- ◆ The waste is autoclaved at 121-123 degrees Centigrade (250-254 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least 30 minutes in an approved red autoclave bag.
- ◆ The autoclave bag must have heat sensitive indicator tape, which changes color after sterilization, or another method acceptable to the enforcement agency. Indicator tape may be obtained through any scientific equipment vendor.

An autoclave quality control test must be performed at least monthly. The biological indicator *Bacillus stearothermophilus*, or other indicator of adequate sterilization shall be placed at the center of an autoclave load for the purposes of this test to confirm adequate sterilization conditions. OEH&S will perform independent tests annually to satisfy regulatory agencies.

What laboratory waste may be autoclaved and disposed of in the regular trash?

Microbiological waste including but not limited to the following:

- ◆ Cultures of human or animal specimens from medical and pathological laboratories.
- ◆ Cultures and stocks of microorganisms from research laboratories.
- ◆ Waste from the production of bacteria, viruses, or use of spores, live and attenuated vaccines used in research animal vaccines, and culture dishes and devices used to transfer, inoculate, and/or mix cultures.
- ◆ Waste containing any microbiological specimens or cultures.

Note: If the waste described above is not autoclaved, then it must be disposed of as Red Bag Waste.

Autoclaving of the following is optional. Even if the waste is autoclaved, it must be disposed of (after autoclaving) in a red bag, and never in the regular trash:

- ◆ Waste containing recognizable fluid blood, fluid blood products, containers or equipment containing blood that is fluid.
- ◆ Human surgery specimens, tissues or other human pathological waste.
- ◆ Carcasses and animal parts, tissues, or fluids.

What laboratory waste must not be autoclaved?

- ◆ Sharps waste, such as needles, syringes with needles, any other needle or syringe parts, scalpels, razors, or broken glass items such as Pasteur pipettes. Note: These waste sharps MUST be placed in an approved puncture-and-leak-resistant sharps waste container.
- ◆ Chemical or radioactive waste (as these materials may become volatile in an autoclave).