

Clinical & Medical Waste Policy

1 January 2017 Version Number:1

Review Date: Summer Term 2018

Northern
House
School



Overview

Some wastes from healthcare (also called clinical or medical waste) may prove hazardous to those that come into contact with them and are subject to stringent controls.

Controls on the disposal of healthcare waste

Under the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) it is unlawful to deposit, recover or dispose of controlled (including clinical) waste without a waste management licence, contrary to the conditions of a licence or the terms of an exemption, or in a way which causes pollution of the environment or harm to human health. Contravention of waste controls is a criminal offence. [Section 34](#) of the act, places people concerned with controlled (including clinical) waste under a duty of care to ensure that the waste is managed properly, recovered or disposed of safely and is only transferred to someone who is authorised to keep it. Householders are exempt for their own household waste.

Hazardous healthcare waste is subject to the requirements of the [Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005](#) (PDF, 83.3KB, 11 pages) .

The Environment Agency is responsible for administering the hazardous waste regime. Again, householders are not subject to the requirements of these regulations.

The Department of Health published a best practice guide to the management of healthcare waste:

- [Safe management of healthcare waste](#)

Healthcare waste produced in a school.

Hypodermic needles and other hazardous healthcare wastes should never be disposed of in the domestic waste stream.

If a pupil is treated at school by a qualified first aider/trained in administering medication any waste produced as a result is considered to be the healthcare professional's waste. If the waste is non-hazardous, and as long as it is appropriately bagged and sealed, it is acceptable for the waste to be disposed of with household waste. This is usually the case with sanitary towels, nappies and incontinence pads (known collectively as sanpro waste) which are not considered to be hazardous when they originate from a healthy population. If the waste is classified as hazardous, the healthcare professional can remove that waste and transport it in approved containers (ie rigid, leak proof, sealed, secured etc.) and take it back to the trust base for appropriate disposal.

If patients treat themselves in their own home, any waste produced as a result is considered to be their own. Only where a particular risk has been identified (based on medical diagnosis) does such waste need to be treated as hazardous clinical waste. Local authorities have a duty to collect household waste including healthcare waste from domestic properties. Under the controlled waste regulations, the authority may charge for the collection of specific waste streams, including clinical waste.

Where hypodermic needles are produced in the school, on no account should soft drink cans, plastic bottles or similar containers be used for the disposal of needles, since these could present serious

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hazards to staff if they were disposed of in domestic waste. Sharps bins can be obtained on prescription (FP10 prescription form) and can be returned to your doctor for disposal when full. The duty on local authorities to collect and dispose of clinical waste generated by schools also applies to sharps waste and again the local authority may make a charge to cover the cost of collection.

In the case of pharmaceuticals (medicines etc), the recommended means of disposal is to return them to a pharmacist. If this is not possible, again local authorities are obliged to collect the waste separately when asked to do so by the waste holder, but may make a charge to cover the cost of collection.

Human hygiene waste

Human hygiene or sanpro waste can sometimes be produced in large quantities in places such as schools, nurseries and motorway service areas. Although such wastes from these sources may be non-hazardous, in quantity they can be offensive and cause handling problems. In these cases, where the premises generate more than one standard bag or container of human hygiene waste over the usual collection interval, it is considered appropriate to package it separately from other waste streams.

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