



## Clinical Waste – Storage, Collection & Disposal

### Definition:

Clinical waste is that which has the potential to cause sharps injury, infection or public offence and includes:

- discarded sharps;
- human tissue (excludes teeth, hair, nails, urine and faeces);
- materials which contain free flowing or expressible blood;
- related waste which includes:
  - cytotoxic waste (unused portion of cytotoxic drugs)
  - pharmaceutical waste
  - chemical waste (eg: formalin, alcohol based formulations)
  - radioactive waste

### Storage

Clinical waste containers should be provided in each area of the Practice where clinical waste is generated. When selecting the appropriate clinical waste containers consider:

- A good sealing lid;
- Be rigid walled
- Hands free operation where possible e.g. foot pedal or sensor operated bin container, and in some settings wide mouthed sharps containers can be used for all clinical waste.

Whilst in active Practice areas, clinical waste containers shall:

- Be lined with plastic bags marked with a black biohazard symbol;
- Have a biohazard sign affixed to the outside;
- Be emptied when full and/or at the end of each day;
- Be safely located away from the reach of children

Before collection, clinical waste must be stored appropriately. This involves:

- Double bagging (the outer bag for clinical waste shall be yellow to identify the contents)
- Secure storage preferably inside a locked, leak proof yellow bin with a biohazard symbol. There should be no public access to this area.
- The outer bag for clinical waste shall be yellow to identify the contents for appropriate disposal;
- Bags need to be securely stored preferably inside a locked yellow bin with a biohazard symbol and/or in a restricted area. There should be no access available to the public

The storage area should be:

- separate from clean stores;
- clean.

### Collection and Disposal

Clinical waste disposal requires the use of licensed contractors and high temperature incineration or special burial. For compliance reasons regarding disposal, contact your local council or environment pollution agency. If the waste is disposed of by a contractor offsite, you will require:

- A Contract- This should be a contractual arrangement between the Practice and the waste company, indicating an agreement to remove clinical and sharps waste. It is essential that the company's EPA License number is noted on the contract.
- A certificate of disposal
- A certificate stating that the contractor disposes of the waste in accordance with the Environment Protection Authority guidelines

*Reference: RACGP Infection Control Standards for Office Based Practices – 4th Edition*

*Reference: RACGP Standards for General Practice – 3rd Edition*