



Metro Medical Waste Acceptance Procedures

Solid Waste Operations

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines Metro's policies relating to the disposal of medical waste at Metro's transfer stations. These policies have been developed to ensure compliance with state regulations and the Metro Code, and to protect the health and safety of Metro employees and the public.

II. MEDICAL WASTE ACCEPTANCE RULES

A. Unacceptable Medical Waste

Infectious waste must be segregated from other waste by separate containment at the point of generation. Waste generators are to comply with segregation, treatment and storage requirements in OAR 333 Division 56. Sharps must be segregated and separately contained.

The following types of waste are **not accepted** at Metro facilities:

- Any untreated infectious waste
- Pathological waste (must be incinerated)
- Biological waste or free-flowing fluids that can be discarded into the sewer system (potentially infectious fluids and semi-solids)
- Animal carcasses or waste that is not properly packaged and declared according to these rules.
- Animal waste that is not visually distinguishable from other potentially infectious materials
- Animal carcasses, waste or remains are not acceptable from any type of animal medical care facility, kennel, veterinary clinic or hospital, or from any animal research setting.
- Sharps from commercial generators
- Radioactive medical waste
- Hazardous (chemical) waste
- Waste that is capable of causing disease or adverse health effects in humans, including any waste contaminated with or suspected of being contaminated with a DOT Category A infectious substance.
- Containers or bags labeled with biohazard symbols, even if empty

B. Acceptable Medical Waste

Any hauler who delivers waste from a hospital to a Metro Regional Transfer Station must identify the generator of the waste to the Scalehouse Technician or load check personnel upon delivery.

The following items are accepted at Metro facilities along with regular solid waste:

- Medical tubing and equipment that does not contain any sharps, blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- Waste from hospitals, clinics and care facilities that is not potentially “Infectious Waste” or “Saturated Waste” under OAR 333-056-0020.
- Diapers that are not contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials. (Diapers may contain low level radioactive waste that triggers monitors at Metro Transfer Stations. This material is subject to response procedures as per Metro's Radiation Response Standard Procedures.)
- All waste from hospitals must be delivered in transparent plastic bags.
- All solid, segregated, and mixed waste loads from hospitals are subject to inspection under Metro’s Load Check and Hospital Load Check programs.

C. Treated (Non-Infectious) Medical Waste

All potentially infectious waste must be sorted at the point of generation to prevent disposal of unacceptable materials.

1. Disposal of all treated infectious waste requires a Metro Special Waste Permit. A Metro Special Waste Permit Application can be obtained by contacting the Metro Recycling Information Center (RIC) at 503-234-3000 or sending an email to special.waste@oregonmetro.gov.
2. All potentially infectious waste must be rendered non-infectious by an approved method of treatment (i.e., autoclave or other treatment method approved by the State as described in OAR333-56-0030). This waste is referred to as “treated waste”.
3. No waste contaminated with or suspected of being contaminated with DOT Category A infectious substances will be accepted, even when treated.
4. The hauler who delivers the waste to the Metro facility must identify the generator of the waste to the scalehouse technician upon delivery.
5. The treated waste must be accompanied with documentation stating that it has been properly treated. Written verification of the treatment is delivered to the transfer station operator/spotter at the time the waste is tipped at the Metro transfer station. These records must demonstrate that the generator has properly treated the waste according to the manufacturer, the Oregon Health Authority, and the Metro Special Waste Permit. Records must include date, temperature, time of treatment, and signature by a designated person who is qualified to declare the waste sterilized.
6. All treated waste must be properly contained and labeled as required by State legislation and the following Metro acceptance rules.
 - a) Treated waste must be in red medical waste disposal bags that are labeled with the biohazard symbol and the words “Biohazardous Waste”.

- b) A visual identification method, such as clear outer autoclave bags or heat sensitive tape, must be used that will clearly show when infectious waste has been properly treated. The waste generator must state the identification method on the Metro Special Waste Permit.
 - c) Metro will reject any loads that do not appear to be properly treated. (See Section V - Load Check and Response Procedures.)
7. Treated infectious waste may be delivered segregated from other solid waste that is delivered to Metro transfer stations under the following conditions:
- a) Segregated treated waste that is delivered separately from other trash may not be compacted.
 - b) Treated waste must not be “saturated” or cause dripping from bags. Leaking bags must be contained in secondary bags or specified disposal containers.
 - c) Segregated waste may be delivered to the Metro facility identified in the Special Waste Permit.
 - d) Every load must be accompanied by a copy of the Special Waste Permit and documentation stating that it has been properly treated as described above.
8. Treated infectious waste may be delivered mixed with other solid waste under the following conditions (other conditions are specified in the Special Waste Permit):
- a) Every load of mixed medical/solid waste must be accompanied by the Special Waste Permit and documentation stating that all autoclaved materials in the load have been properly treated as described above.
 - b) Treated waste may be co-mingled in compacting or non-compacting disposal containers for direct transport to Metro.
 - c) Mixed treated waste is not accepted at Metro Central Transfer Station.
 - Mixed treated waste must be delivered to Metro South Transfer Station, located at 2001 Washington Street, Oregon City, Oregon during hours the site is open to the public (7:00 am - 7:00 pm).
 - d) Loads of mixed, treated medical waste may not be “saturated” or cause free flowing liquid to spill from the load with or without compaction. Adequate absorbent materials must be included in each load to absorb liquids generated by the treated waste.
 - A limit of 1% liquid (approximately 2.5 gallons per ton) with a maximum of 25 gallons per load.
 - Organic or inorganic absorbent products may be used to absorb liquid released in container during storage and transport.
 - e) Hospitals must minimize holding time of waste before delivery to Metro transfer stations.

- f) All loads are inspected during tipping at Metro transfer stations. Generator paperwork must be provided to the station operator/spotter at the time of delivery.

D. Animal Carcasses and Animal Waste

Rules regarding animal waste disposal are in place to prevent animal remains from showing up in the pit or on the floor. Once these remains are mixed with the regular trash it is often difficult to determine if they were animal or human.

Animal remains will be accepted under the following rules only:

1. Animal carcasses, waste or remains must be triple wrapped in plastic.
2. The customer must alert the scalehouse and spotter of the animal carcass.
3. The animal carcass cannot be compacted inside a packer.
4. The animal carcass will be off loaded directly into the facility compactors.
5. Animal carcasses, waste or remains must not be unloaded directly onto the tipping floor or into the pit.

E. Pharmaceuticals

1. The following pharmaceuticals are not acceptable:
 - Pharmaceuticals that are controlled under the US Controlled Substances Act
 - Substances that are considered hazardous waste under federal or Oregon hazardous waste management regulations
 - Chemotherapy pharmaceuticals
 - Radioactive pharmaceuticals, unless properly decayed in storage per a facility's radioactive materials license
2. Other pharmaceuticals, both prescription and non-prescription, are acceptable for disposal as solid waste at Metro's transfer stations, but must be handled per EPA recommended procedures:
 - Take the medication out of the original containers.
 - Mix medication, either liquid or solid, with an undesirable substance. Undesirable substances include sand, coffee grounds, kitty litter, or other absorbent materials.
 - Place the waste mixture in a sealable bag, empty can, or other container to prevent leakage.

III. METRO SPECIAL WASTE PERMIT FEES AND CHARGES

A. Metro Special Waste Application and Permit Fee

- Metro staff will request information about autoclave methods, maintenance and testing, training and operator certification. Other permit conditions, including acceptable disposal times and sites may be specified in the Special Waste Permit.
- Metro Special Waste Permits for medical waste should be renewed before the expiration date. Metro will send renewal forms approximately one month prior to the expiration date. If you do not receive a renewal form, send an email to special.waste@oregonmetro.gov.
- Medical Waste Permits may be revoked if waste sorting, treatment, or response requirements of the Special Waste Permit are not met.

B. Special Waste Fee

A special waste fee may be assessed for all loads containing treated medical waste or ground sharps, as specified in Metro Code Chapter 5.02 in order to cover the additional costs of inspecting and managing these loads. Hospitals must obtain a Special Waste Permit from Metro prior to delivering treated waste.

C. Unacceptable Waste Clean-up and Response Charges

If unacceptable waste is discovered that requires response and/or clean-up by site staff, Metro may bill the generator of the waste for time and materials used during the clean-up. Cost of clean-up will be determined using Metro's schedule of response charges, and on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

D. Sharps Containers and Container Exchange Program (for non-commercial customers only)

A one-time user fee of \$5.00 at either Metro Central or Metro South Hazardous Waste Facility includes purchase of first container and disposal. See Section IV for more information on this program.

E. Non-System License for Direct Haul

Hospitals may apply for a non-system license for direct haul of treated waste to Columbia Ridge Landfill. Metro's non-system licenses are issued through an administrative process that allows for a thorough review of the waste generator's proposal. Contact Metro's Solid Waste Compliance and Cleanup staff at (503)797-1835 to receive information on how to apply for a non-system license. Additional application fees may be required for a non-system license.

IV. SHARPS

Sharps are unacceptable in Metro's waste stream, unless they are delivered separately, properly contained and labeled.

- Untreated sharps generated from commercial generators are not accepted at Metro Transfer Stations or Hazardous Waste Facilities.
- Sharps found abandoned on commercial or residential property will be accepted at Metro Hazardous Waste Facilities in approved sharps containers at no charge.

A. Approved Sharps Containers

- All untreated sharps must be delivered in approved sharps containers. Sharps delivered in unapproved containers will be considered uncontained infectious materials, and must be transferred by the customer into an approved container or they will not be accepted.
- Approved sharps containers are defined by ORS 459.390 are "leakproof, rigid, puncture resistant red containers that are taped or tightly closed to prevent loss of the contents" and are "clearly identified as containing infectious waste".

B. Sharps from Commercial Sources

Metro does not accept commercially generated sharps unless they are treated, shredded and a Metro Special Waste Permit is obtained.

C. Treated and Shredded Sharps

Treated and shredded sharps are accepted from generators who have a Special Waste Permit for this specific waste stream.

Sharps and containers must be:

1. Treated by appropriate sterilization method.
2. Delivered with appropriate documentation stating that each load of sharps was properly treated prior to shredding. Written verification of the treatment is delivered to the transfer station operator/spotter at the time the waste is tipped at the Metro transfer station. These records must demonstrate that the hospital has properly treated the waste according to the manufacturer, the Oregon Health Division, and the Metro Special Waste Permit. Records must include date, temperature and time of treatment, and signature by a designated person who is qualified to declare the waste sterilized. Metro will provide a sample waste declaration form with each Special Waste Permit.
3. Shredded into a standard classification of "unrecognizable" (samples are approved by Metro in Special Waste Permit Application).
4. Delivered to Metro South during hours the site is open to the public (7:00 am - 7:00 pm) or as specified on the Special Waste Permit.

D. Sharps from Residential Sources

Sharps generated by residential users and delivered in approved sharps containers are accepted for a small fee at Metro transfer stations and hazardous waste facilities.

1. Sharps Delivered by Residential Franchise Haulers

Metro accepts sharps delivered by haulers at transfer stations under the following conditions:

- A residential customer must generate the sharps.
- The sharps must be delivered in approved sharps containers.
- Sharps containers must be segregated from regular waste in the load and may not be compacted.

2. Sharps Acceptance at Hazardous Waste Facilities

- Sharps in approved containers are accepted at Metro South and Metro Central Hazardous Waste Facilities during normal HWF operating hours: Monday through Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- For first time sharps customers, a one-time enrollment fee of \$5 is charged. The fee includes participation in the container exchange program and a new sharps container.
- In addition, Metro's fee for household hazardous waste, \$5 for a load of up to 35 gallons, will be charged. If the load consists only of a single sharps container, 2 gallons or less, Metro staff may waive the \$5 fee.
- A limit of five gallons of sharps will be accepted at one time, unless prior arrangements are made with the Hazardous Waste Facility.

3. Uncontained Sharps

To protect worker safety, Metro employees and transfer station operators may not accept or handle sharps in unapproved containers.

- Uncontained sharps are not accepted at Metro Transfer Stations. Customers with uncontained sharps will be referred to the hazardous waste facility during operating hours.
- Metro will provide the customer with an approved sharps disposal container. The customer is responsible for transferring sharps into the approved container.
- A \$5.00 enrollment fee will be charged. This charge includes a new sharps container and inclusion in the container exchange program.
- Metro will provide leather gloves, tongs, and an approved sharps container on request.

4. Sharps Container Exchange Program

Metro's Sharps Container Exchange Program has been in place since 1996. This program was initiated by Metro to protect workers from needle-sticks and to help provide convenient disposal services to the public.

Sharps accepted for disposal must be from residential sources.

- Each time sharps are delivered for disposal, the customer will be offered a new approved sharps container, free of charge.
- One new container will be exchanged for each container delivered.
- Once the new container is full, it may be returned to a Metro facility and exchanged for a new replacement container.
- Metro properly disposes of all sharps collected.
- A one-time \$5.00 program enrollment fee will be charged. This charge includes a new sharps container and inclusion in the container exchange program.
- In addition, Metro's fee for household hazardous waste, \$5 for a load of up to 35 gallons, will be charged when sharps are brought in for disposal. If the load consists only of a single sharps container, 2 gallons or less, Metro staff may waive the \$5 fee.

5. Sharps Container Purchase

Sharps containers are not offered for sale by Metro. As part of the Sharps Container Exchange Program, Metro charges \$5 per container enrolled in the program.

6. Sharps Disposal Informational Brochures

Informational brochures are available through Metro Recycling Information Center (503-234-3000), Metro transfer stations and hazardous waste facilities, local governments, hospitals, medical clinics, and hauler associations. Information about this program is used by local hospitals to train nurses and sharps users, and to educate the public on proper disposal procedures.

V. METRO'S LOAD CHECK PROGRAM AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

In order to prevent improper disposal, Metro has established procedures for ongoing spotting at the tipping floors, and has implemented a load-checking program to identify improperly disposed infectious waste prior to compaction and transport from Metro facilities.

Regular waste loads are inspected on a random basis.

All regular waste loads delivered from hospitals and other large commercial generators of infectious waste are inspected at Metro facilities. The hauler must inform the Scalehouse Technician of the source of each hospital load.

Spotters inspect all mixed-waste loads during tipping. The hauler must inform the Scalehouse Technician of the source of each mixed waste load. The hauler must present all documentation required by the Special Waste Permit to the transfer station operator prior to load tipping and inspection.

A. Spotting Procedures

All mixed waste loads will be visually inspected during tipping by a floor inspector and by the loader operator in the pit. If any of the following items are found in a load check, or spotted at any time in a regular load, on the tipping floor or in the solid waste stream, they will be immediately isolated from other waste. The hauler and generator will be determined and contacted immediately.

- Red infectious waste bags or containers which appear to contain infectious waste without proper documentation stating that it has been properly treated
- Sharps containers
- Any item that appears to be infectious waste including undeclared waste and waste which does not appear to have been properly or completely treated

B. Determining the Generator

If the generator is not known or identified through a Special Waste Permit or by the hauler, a thorough effort will be made to determine the generator of the waste. This may include questioning the hauler regarding the origin of the load, or examining the unacceptable materials along with other materials in the load for any signs of shipping labels, letterhead, or addresses. Once the generator is determined, they will be notified as soon as possible.

Only Metro employees who have received Emergency Response and Bloodborne Pathogens training and are properly equipped will be allowed to examine the load in an attempt to determine the generator, and only when all other options have been eliminated.

C. Response and Clean-up Actions

Metro reserves the right to determine appropriate clean-up actions on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, the generator may be permitted to perform the required clean-up themselves (following Metro's established safety guidelines for handling infectious waste), or the generator may select to have trained Metro staff perform the clean-up at a set billing rate for service and disposal.

Metro may determine that a clean-up contractor will be required to perform the clean-up. In most cases, the generator will be given the option to decide whether to privately contract for clean-up or to have Metro arrange for clean-up and be billed for the service. The following procedural rules will apply to clean-up and disposal:

1. **Generator Response Time:** Metro must be advised on selected method of clean-up within one hour of the initial notification to the generator.

- If the generator selects to respond or to send a privately contracted clean-up crew to perform the work, **maximum response time to the site will be limited to two (2) hours.**
 - If the generator clean-up crew does not arrive at the site within two hours, Metro will commence clean-up procedures as necessary and bill the generator.
2. **Metro Response:** Whenever Metro staff or a Metro contracted clean-up crew performs the clean-up, the generator may send a designated representative to the site to verify clean-up, disposal, and billing.

D. Safety Requirements

Universal precautions for handling infectious materials are required at Metro facilities.

1. Metro requires that appropriately trained and equipped personnel handle clean-up procedures.
2. Appropriate assessment, use of hand-tools, clean-up methods, containment, and disinfecting procedures are required at Metro facilities. Metro reserves the right to stop any clean-up actions if they are deemed unsafe by an authorized Metro representative.
3. Clean-up crews are responsible for disposing of all waste materials. Equipment and work areas shall be thoroughly decontaminated. Response personnel shall be provided with equipped with personal decontamination supplies and other required Personal Protective Equipment.
4. Hospital clean-up crews will not be permitted to respond to incidents in the disposal pit at Metro South. Metro will determine appropriate clean-up actions for items discovered in the pit.

E. Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The generator or contracted clean-up crew is responsible for supplying and disposing of all PPE. Metro requires that clean-up personnel use the following safety equipment:

- Fluid-resistant coveralls
- Puncture and fluid-resistant hand protection (latex and leather or butyl rubber gloves)
- Puncture-resistant, fluid-resistant, and slip-resistant footwear
- Hard-hat
- Eye protection (safety glasses, goggles or mask-type respirator)
- Mouth protection (minimum of dust mask required)

F. Tools and Equipment

Generators and contracted clean-up crews are required to supply the following tools and equipment as needed for clean-up:

- Hand tools (tongs, shovels, broom, dustpan)
- Red disposal bags and/or fluid-resistant containers
- Sharps containers
- Absorbent material or pads
- Bleach or other disinfectant on the EPA list of disinfectants
- Large pail for decontamination
- Personal protective equipment
- Personal decontamination equipment (disinfectant soap, towel, etc.)