

Department of Pathology

**REGULATED
MEDICAL WASTE**

TAMC REG 40-34: MANAGEMENT & DISPOSAL
OF REGULATED MEDICAL WASTE

Revised March 2017

General Waste vs. Regulated Medical Waste

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- *General waste* is defined as all waste not classified as regulated medical waste (RMW), radiological, cytotoxic, hazardous, or an animal carcass. General waste is disposed of by normal waste disposal methods without pretreatment.
- *Regulated medical waste (RMW)* is defined as waste capable of causing infectious disease in humans and animals, to include sharps and pathological waste. Treatment of waste required.

General Waste

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□ Examples

- Soiled dressings (except smallpox vaccination site)
- Bandages
- Disposable catheters
- Swabs
- Used disposable drapes, coats/gowns, hair bonnet, masks, gloves, shoe covers
- Empty used specimen containers
 - De-identify any patient protected health information (PHI)
- Blood-tinged gauze
- Empty bedpans and urinals
- Diapers
- Blue absorbent pads



General Waste Glassware Disposal



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- ❑ Place non-infectious glassware in a sturdy, intact cardboard box (no openings or holes)
 - Examples of non-infectious glassware:
 - Unused slides and coverslips
 - Used non-infectious slides (per Supervisor or Preventive Medicine)
 - Non-infectious serological pipets (glass or rigid plastic)
 - Other non-infectious glassware (e.g., beakers, cylinders, flasks)
- ❑ Secure box with tape
- ❑ Label box with “**GLASS**” for Housekeeping to discard

Regulated Medical Waste Handling, Storage, and Collection

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- Follow Standard Precautions
 - Wear proper personal protective equipment when handling/disposing of infectious waste
- Store non-sharp RMW in sturdy, leak-proof containers lined with an approved red tear and impact-resistant plastic bags¹
 - RMW storage containers must be clearly labeled or marked with the universal biohazard (UBH) symbol
- Call Housekeeping (day: 433-6083, evening/night: 363-4453) for removal and replacement of RMW red plastic bags
 - Do NOT remove red bags



¹ RMW bags must meet the Department of Transportation requirements shown in 49 CFR 173.197 (e)

Examples of Non-sharp RMW

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- Not all inclusive
 - ▣ Lavage and drainage tubes
 - ▣ Serum or plasma pour-off tubes
 - ▣ Filled or partially filled specimen containers
 - ▣ Items that could “release blood” or other potentially infectious material (OPIM) if compressed
 - ▣ Items caked with dried blood capable of release during handling
 - ▣ Human tissue, organs, body parts, or body fluids
 - ▣ Bacteria and fungal cultures

RMW (Non-Sharp) with Additional Handling Procedures

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- Pathological Waste – Anatomic Pathology
 - ▣ Dispose tissue into designated 15 gallon blue drum
 - ▣ Anatomic Pathology notifies the Housekeeping for transport to the designated holding area
- Pathological Waste – Blood collection tubes
 - ▣ Primary blood collection tubes containing blood (not pour off tubes)
 - ▣ Discard tubes in RMW storage container labelled “Pathological Waste”
- Blood Products
 - ▣ Refer to Blood Bank storage and disposal protocols

RMW

Sharps Disposal

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- Sharp items to be disposed of in an approved RMW sharps container:
 - Used and unused sharps
 - Hypodermic needles
 - Syringes (with or without the attached needle)
 - Scalpel blades
 - Needles attached to tubing
 - Other types of broken and unbroken glassware contaminated with infectious agents
 - Glass slides and coverslips
 - Pasteur pipettes
 - Specimen cups with sharp edges



Sharps

Safe Work Practices



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- ❑ Discard sharps at the point of generation into rigid puncture-resistant container marked with the UBH symbol
- ❑ Sharp containers must be physically secured to the building or under constant supervision to prevent misuse or access by unauthorized personnel
- ❑ Never store items on top of sharp containers
- ❑ Do not recap, purposely bend, break, or otherwise manipulate needles

Sharps

Safe Work Practices

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- Replace when container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full or filled to the “Full” marking
 - ▣ Do not overfill container
- Close & lock lid
- Label container with following information:
 - ▣ Date
 - ▣ Lab section or room number where waste was generated
 - ▣ Initials of the responsible individual securing the sharp container
- Store in a designated area for Housekeeping to discard



**Contact the DPALS Safety Manager
or Safety Officer with any questions
or concerns**