



Community Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Health and Social Care

Waste Management

WASTE MANAGEMENT

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This guidance document has been adopted as a policy document by:

Organisation:	Cumbria County Council
Signed:	
Name:	Pam Duke
Job Title:	Assistant Director Provider Services
Directorate:	People
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For further information and advice regarding infection prevention and control please contact:

<p>Fiona McCredie Head of Health Protection Public Health People Directorate Cumbria County Council Penrith Community Fire Station Carleton Avenue Penrith Cumbria CA10 2FA</p> <p>Tel: 01768 812539 Mob: 07900 668648 Email: Fiona.McCredie@cumbria.gov.uk</p>	<p>Debbie McKenna Health Protection Specialist Public Health People Directorate Cumbria County Council Cumbria House 107-117 Botchergate Carlisle Cumbria CA1 1RZ</p> <p>Mob: 07769 301904 Email: Deborah.McKenna@cumbria.gov.uk</p>
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This document has been written and produced by:

Community Infection Prevention and Control
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
Gibraltar House, Thurston Road
Northallerton, North Yorkshire. DL6 2NA
Tel: 01423 557340
Email: ipccommunity@hdfnhs.uk
www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk

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1. Introduction

The management of health and social care waste is an essential part of ensuring that health and social care activities do not pose a risk or potential risk of infection and are securely managed. Waste is potentially hazardous and if not disposed of correctly can result in injury or infection.

All staff are responsible for the safe management and disposal of waste and should understand how waste should be segregated and stored prior to collection or disposal. This is driven by the need to reduce environmental impact, comply with waste regulations and other national guidance such as the Health and Social Care Act 2008: *Code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance* (DH 2010), and reduce costs associated with waste management.

2. Responsibilities

Health and social care providers have a responsibility for ensuring that waste is dealt with appropriately from the point of production to the point of final disposal. All staff should be trained and aware of waste procedures. It remains the legal responsibility of the health and social care provider, not the waste contractor, to ensure full compliance with environmental waste regulations. Waste should be:

- correctly segregated
- appropriately labelled
- packaged appropriately for transportation
- stored safely and in a secure place away from areas of public access within the premise
- described accurately and fully on the accompanying documentation when removed from the premise
- transferred to an authorised waste contractor for transport to an authorised waste disposal site.

3. Disposal of waste

- All waste should be segregated correctly as per your local policy and in accordance with your waste contractor.
- When handling waste, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn.

- All waste bags should be no more than 2/3 full. This allows enough space for the bag to be tied using a suitable plastic tie or secure knot.
- Waste bags should be labelled with the address and date prior to collection by the waste contractor (some waste contractors may undertake this) to ensure traceability if an incident occurs.
- When handling tied waste bags, only hold the bag by the neck and keep at arm's reach to reduce the risk of injury in case a sharp item has been inappropriately disposed of in the bag.
- In a service user's own home, waste should be securely bagged and disposed of as per your local policy.
- If a waste bag awaiting collection is torn, the torn bag and contents should be placed inside a new waste bag.

4. Assessing waste for segregation

Health and social care waste should be assessed by the member of staff at the time the waste is produced and segregated in the correct colour waste stream identified below.

Guide for correct colour waste streams		
Colour waste stream and disposal type	Container type	Description
Yellow: Infectious waste for incineration in a suitably permitted or licensed facility (must not be sent for alternative treatment)	Yellow bag or yellow lidded sharps container	Waste classified as infectious Waste contaminated with body fluids from a service user with a known or suspected infection which poses a potential infection risk and there are also medicines or chemicals present. Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anatomical wastes and tissue samples preserved in hazardous chemicals • medicines, medicinally-contaminated syringes, medicated dressings • contaminated dressings that contains an active pharmaceutical, e.g., ibuprofen • diagnostic kits contaminated with potentially infectious body fluids and chemical reagents (this does not include sticks from dip tests).

Guide for correct colour waste streams		
Colour waste stream and disposal type	Container type	Description
<p>Orange: Infectious waste can be sent for treatment to render it safe prior to disposal or incinerated in a permitted or licensed facility</p>	Orange bag or orange lidded sharps container	<p>Waste classified as infectious Waste contaminated with body fluids from a service user with a known or suspected infection, but no contamination with medicines or chemicals.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contaminated PPE (gloves, aprons, etc.) contaminated dressings very small pieces of tissue syringe bodies contaminated with body fluids, but not medicines.
<p>Yellow and black striped: Offensive/hygiene waste may be landfilled in a permitted or licenced waste facility</p>	Yellow and black striped bag	<p>Waste classified as offensive (non-hazardous) Waste from service users with no known or suspected infection which may be contaminated with body fluids.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stoma or catheter bags incontinence pads hygiene waste gloves, aprons dressings (including blood stained).
<p>Purple: Cytotoxic or cytostatic medicine waste or any items contaminated with these must be sent for incineration in a permitted or licenced waste facility</p>	Purple bag or yellow and purple striped bag. Purple lidded sharps container	<p>Waste classified as hazardous consisting of, or contaminated with, cytotoxic and/or cytostatic medicines.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> medicine containers with residues of cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines (bottles, infusion bags or syringe barrels) items contaminated with cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines, e.g., swabs used sharps from treatment using cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines.

Guide for correct colour waste streams		
Colour waste stream and disposal type	Container type	Description
Blue: Medicinal waste Non-hazardous medicinal waste for incineration in a permitted or licenced waste facility	Blue lidded sharps container	Waste classified as non-hazardous medicinal waste (non-cytotoxic or cytostatic). Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unused medicines in original packages • part empty containers containing residues of medicines • empty medicine bottles.
Black: Domestic waste For landfill at a suitable permitted facility	Black bag (clear or opaque bags may be used)	Items normally found in household waste. Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food waste • paper towels. Waste from adult social care that has been assessed as suitable for disposal as domestic waste, quantities must be less than 7kg (approximately one bag).

5. Additional IPC resources

The North Yorkshire and York Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) team have produced a wide range of innovative educational and other IPC resources. These resources are designed to assist your organisation in achieving compliance with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and CQC requirements. Further information on these high quality evidence-based resources is available at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk

6. References

Department of Health (2013) *Environment and sustainability Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe management of healthcare waste*

Department of Health (2011) *Safe management of healthcare waste Version 2.0 : England*

Department of Health (2010) *The Health and Social Act 2008. Code of Practice for the Prevention and control of healthcare associated infections*

Royal College of Nursing (2014) *The management of waste from health, social and personal care RCN guidance*