



Community Infection Prevention and Control Policy for Care Home settings

Safe disposal of waste

SAFE DISPOSAL OF WASTE

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

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1. Introduction

This Policy is one of the 10 'Standard infection control precautions' (SICPs) referred to as 'Safe disposal of waste (including sharps)' by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

The management of healthcare waste is an essential part of ensuring that care home activities do not pose a risk or potential risk of infection and are appropriately 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*, and reduce costs associated with waste management.

Contingency plans and emergency procedures are in place in the event of contamination from waste.

2. Responsibilities

Staff in care homes have a responsibility for ensuring that waste is dealt with appropriately from the point of generation to the point of final disposal. All staff should be trained and aware of waste procedures. It remains the legal responsibility of the care home, 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
- To complete and retain waste documentation, including record keeping
- Transferred to an authorised waste contractor for transport to an authorised waste disposal site

3. Disposal of waste

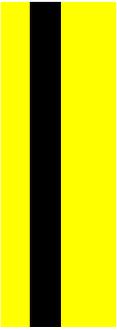
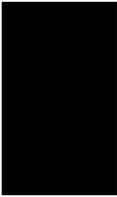
- All waste should be segregated correctly (see Section 4).
- When handling waste, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn, and hands cleaned after removing each item of PPE, e.g. pair of gloves, apron.
- All waste bags should be no more than 3/4 full and no more than 4 kg in weight. This allows enough space for the bag to be tied using a suitable plastic zip 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 arms length to reduce the risk of injury in case a sharp item has been inappropriately disposed of in the bag.
- If a waste bag awaiting collection is torn or contaminated, the bag and contents should be placed inside a new waste bag.
- Waste bins in clinical areas, resident's rooms and toilets should be lined and foot pedal operated with a lid. Always use the foot operated mechanism to open the lid to prevent hand contamination. If this is used by the resident, a risk assessment should be undertaken.
- Waste bins in other areas, e.g. office, should have a liner, but do not need to have a lid.

4. Assessing waste for segregation

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. Further information can be found in the *Environment and sustainability Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe management of healthcare waste*.

Waste stream guide for Care Home settings	
Colour*	Description
Orange 	<p>Infectious waste: items contaminated with urine, faeces, vomit, sputum, pus or wound exudate, from a known, suspected or at risk of infection source. Items may include personal protective equipment (PPE), continence pads, urine bags, single use items, single use bowls and dressings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste from blood and/or body fluid spillages. • Infectious waste may be treated to render it safe prior to disposal, or alternatively incinerated in a licensed facility.

Waste stream guide for Care Home settings (continued)

Colour*	Description
Yellow and black 	<p>Offensive/hygiene waste: items contaminated with urine, faeces, vomit, sputum, pus or wound exudate, from residents with no risk of, known or suspected infection. Items may include PPE, continence pads, urine bags, single use items, single use bowls, dressings, feminine hygiene, nappies and any other items assessed to be non-infectious, such as uncontaminated PPE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liquids, e.g. urine, faeces, vomit, should be discarded into a foul sewer (sluice or toilet). They can, however, be absorbed onto a disposable cloth, e.g. paper towel, and placed in the offensive waste stream, ensuring there is no free-flowing liquid present. Offensive/hygiene waste may be land filled in a permitted or licensed facility.
Black 	<p>Domestic waste: items which do not contain infectious materials, sharps or medicinal products, e.g. paper towels from hand washing, packaging, newspapers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear or opaque waste bags can also be used for domestic waste. Recycling options should be considered where available. Domestic waste may be land filled in a permitted or licensed facility.
Purple 	<p>This waste stream is rarely used in care home settings.</p> <p>Cytotoxic and cytostatic waste: items contaminated with hormone or oxytocin-based agents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cytotoxic and cytostatic waste must be incinerated in a permitted or licensed facility.

* Colour waste streams may vary depending on waste contractors – check with your local contractor before implementing the waste stream guidance.

5. Infection Prevention and Control resources, education and training

The Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team have produced a wide range of innovative educational and IPC resources designed to assist your Care Home in achieving compliance with *The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance* and CQC registration requirements.

These resources are either free to download from the website or available at a minimal cost covering administration and printing:

- 29 IPC Policy documents for Care Home settings
- 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for Care Homes'

- 'IPC CQC Inspection Preparation Pack for Care Homes'
- IPC audit tools, posters, leaflets and factsheets
- 'IPC Bulletin for Care Homes'

In addition, we hold educational study events in North Yorkshire and can arrange bespoke training packages and 'Mock IPC CQC Inspections'. Prices vary depending on your requirements and location.

Further information on these high quality evidence-based resources is available at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk.

6. References

Department of Health (2015) *The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance*

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

NHS England and NHS Improvement (March 2019) *Standard infection control precautions: national hand hygiene and personal protective equipment policy*

NHS Improvement (July 2017) *Patient Safety Alert: Risk of death and severe harm from ingestion of superabsorbent polymer gel granules*