



What Is Clinical Waste & Why Is Its Management Important? [1]



Clinical, Medical & Dental

It is widely known that immunisation saves lives, but have you ever considered the question **?what IS clinical waste?** which is produced from mass vaccination programmes such as MMR? It is estimated by the World Health Organisation that 16 billion injections are administered worldwide each year.

These startling figures illustrate the amount of waste that is created by the healthcare sector globally each year. The issue of waste segregation and safe storage is a serious subject matter on several levels, including the environment and health and safety.

Why Clinical Waste Management is Important

Clinical waste management and the correct classification of waste streams has many important benefits including cost efficiencies, reduces the impact of hazardous waste on the environment due to strict

regulations and health and safety.

Health and Safety of Staff and Patients

Correct clinical waste disposal also ensures health and safety of staff, visitors and patients who should be protected from dangerous exposure to medicine, contaminated equipment and sharps. It was found in a survey by the Royal College of Nursing that 48% respondents had been injured at some point in their careers by a sharp or needle that had been used by a patient.

What is Clinical Waste?

Clinical waste is classed as waste that arises from medical, nursing, dental or similar environments that may pose harm to others through injury or infection. Examples include syringes, needles, bandages and dressings that have been contaminated with blood or other sharps instruments. Learn what items are classified as sharps in our guide to sharps disposal. [2]

Full Definition for Clinical Waste

A full definition for clinical waste can be found in the Controlled Waste Regulations Act 2012.

- a. any waste which consists wholly or partly of human or animal tissue, blood or other body fluids, excretions, drugs or other pharmaceutical products, swabs or dressings, syringes, needles or other sharp instruments, being waste which unless rendered safe may prove hazardous to any person coming into contact with it; and
- b. any other waste arising from medical, nursing, dental, veterinary, pharmaceutical or similar practice, investigation, treatment, care, teaching or research, or the collection of blood for transfusion, being waste which may cause infection to any person coming into contact with it.?

Clinical waste can be divided into three broad groups of materials:

- 1) any healthcare waste which poses a risk of infection (and therefore by definition possesses the hazardous property HP9 Infectious);
- 2) certain healthcare wastes which pose a chemical hazard;
- 3) medicines and medicinally-contaminated waste containing a pharmaceutically-active agent.

Who produces Clinical Waste?

Anybody who produces clinical waste or causes it to be produced is a clinical waste producer. This includes Hospitals, Medical & Dental Practices, Nursing Homes, Veterinary Practices, and Community Healthcare Service Providers.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a 'Duty of Care' on any person who imports, produces, carries, keeps or disposes of controlled waste or, as a broker, has control of such waste, to take all such measures applicable to him in that capacity as are reasonable in the circumstances.

- To prevent any other persons committing the offences of depositing, disposing of or recovering controlled waste without an environmental permit or waste management licence.
- To prevent escape of waste i.e. to contain it.
- Waste that is transferred only goes to authorised persons.
- When waste is transferred, correct documentation describes the waste and other relevant details (i.e. a

Duty of Care Waste Transfer Note or Hazardous/Special Waste Consignment Note).

You should only use a contractor who can provide proof of compliance with the legislation. If you break the law you could be fined an unlimited amount.

What is clinical waste segregation & how is it used?

Safe Management of Healthcare Waste issued by The Department of Health stipulates that clinical waste producers should adopt the colour-coded waste segregation system that helps identify and segregate waste. By using this system as best practice it is thought that standardisation can be achieved across the UK. The colour-coded waste segregation guide is also used as best practice in Scotland and Northern Ireland, although the Waste Subgroup of the Sustainability Group, part of the Regional Estates Managers Group, has agreed specific amendments that apply in Northern Ireland.

What is the clinical waste disposal system?

The colour coded **clinical waste management** system is designed for ease of recognition and handling by producers and disposers. Each category of waste is represented by a different colour. The following is a helpful guide to the colours used in segregation.

- **Yellow Lidded Bins** [3]??? partially discharged sharps including those contaminated with medicines (not cytotoxic and cytostatic) and wastes which require incineration.
- **Blue Lidded Bins**?? medicinal and pharmaceutical (not cytotoxic and cytostatic) waste in original or similar packaging for incineration.
- **Orange Lidded Bins**?? items that are contaminated with bodily fluids suitable for alternative treatment e.g. sharps, wipes, dressings, and gloves etc.
- **Purple Lidded Bins**?? waste that is contaminated with cytostatic and cytotoxic medicinal products for incineration.
- **Red Lidded Bin**?? Anatomical waste which includes recognisable body parts and placenta, requires disposal by incineration
- **Yellow & Black Bags**?? Offensive/hygiene waste, such as; nappies, wipes, gloves and any garments with non-infectious body fluids, may be recycled, incinerated or landfilled.
- **White**?? Amalgam wastes & Dental Study Moulds [4] containing Gypsum which are either recovered or recycled.
- **Black Bags? Municipal (domestic)**?waste such as; food and drink packaging, newspaper, fruit and tissues.

Download our clinical waste management poster to learn about what goes where and correct waste segregation. [5]

Why is this waste segregation method important?

Mixing waste is prohibited in England and Wales under Duty of Care and the Hazardous Waste Regulations. Waste must be properly sorted by the correct classification systems. A producer of **clinical waste** is legally required to classify and describe their waste.

Need more information on ?what is clinical waste management??

Citron Hygiene is permitted/licensed to carry and store **clinical wastes**. For more information visit our legislation [6] and clinical waste disposal [7] pages.

Our dedicated staff are trained in waste disposal requirements and our nationwide service ensure that you have a local, friendly team on hand to keep your business running smoothly. For further enquiries please contact us [8].