

Waste Management Policy and Procedure



Purpose and Scope	
<p>Strong waste management processes are essential for ensuring worker and client safety during service delivery. Access4u is committed to protecting all workers, clients, and other individuals present from harm resulting from exposure to waste, infectious or hazardous substances generated during delivery of supports.</p> <p>Access4u endeavours to avoid generation of the waste stream by maximising, reusing and recycling where possible. Where the generation of waste cannot be avoided, Access4u will dispose of waste in a manner that protects people and the environment.</p> <p>Our waste management processes, and use of waste minimisation principles are intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise risks of contamination and the spread of infection • Reduce damage to the environment • Improve occupational health and safety for workers • Comply with legislation • Maintain our reputation and strengthen community relationships 	

Responsibilities and delegations	
This policy applies to	<i>All staff are required to be aware of this policy and staff working directly with Customers / participants must implement a risk management approach to prevent or minimise the transmission of infection.</i>
Policy approval	CEO

Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	<p><i>AS/NZS 3816:1998 Management of clinical and related waste</i> <i>AS/NZS 4123:2008 Mobile waste containers</i> <i>AS 4031-1992 Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas</i> <i>AS/NZS 4261:1994 Reusable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications</i> <i>Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019).</i> <i>National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (2nd edition)</i></p>
Legislation	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)</i>
Contractual obligations	
Organisation policies	
Forms, record keeping, other documents	<p>PPE Waste Management Procedure TH Emergency Management Guidebook</p>

Definitions

Clinical waste: Clinical waste with the potential to cause injury, infection or offence. This includes:

- Unrecognisable human tissue (excluding hair, teeth, nails and anatomical waste)
- Bulk blood or other body fluids (or body substances)
- Material and equipment visibly stained by blood or body fluids (includes incontinence pads and disposable nappies that come from an infectious patient)

Clinical waste also includes “sharps”, being any clinical object capable of inflicting a penetrating injury, which may or may not be contaminated with bloody or body substances. This includes needles, ampoules and other sharp objects design to perform penetrating procedures.

General waste: Any waste that is not a kind of clinical waste, is not chemical waste, has not been in contact with infectious agents, hazardous chemicals or radioactive substances, and does not pose a sharps hazard.

Pharmaceutical waste: Pharmaceuticals or other chemical substances specified as regulated goods under relevant state legislation, as well as any therapeutic good which is unregulated. This includes expired or discarded pharmaceuticals, filters or other material contaminated by pharmaceutical products.

Procedures

Storage and disposal of waste

Waste generated in the delivery of our services can be generally categorised in to three groups:

- General
- Clinical
- Pharmaceutical

General waste disposal

General waste constitutes the bulk of waste generated by health care organisations and is no more of a public health risk than standard domestic waste. If properly managed, it should prevent no actual risk to workers or other individuals.

Incontinence pads and disposable nappies can be treated as general waste, unless the material is judged to have come from an infectious patient, is visibly blood stained, or is disposed of in a manner likely to cause offence, such as in unusually large quantities, in which case it must be treated as clinical waste.

General waste should be contained in white or opaque bags which are labelled accordingly. General waste is to be placed in the general waste bin for disposal.

Clinical waste disposal

Clinical waste is waste generated in a clinical or similar setting that has the potential to cause disease, injury or public offence.

Clinical waste must be properly segregated, packaged, labelled, handled and transported to minimise risk to workers and the community, including needle stick injuries and transmission of disease. All sharps and waste containers must meet the Australian and New Zealand Standards AS/NZS 3816: *Management of clinical and related waste* and AS/NZS 4123: *Mobile waste containers*.

Waste Management Policy and Procedure



Clinical waste is to be placed in biohazard bags as soon as reasonably possible. Biohazard bags will be identifiable to workers by their biohazard symbol and yellow colour. Clinical waste (including sharps) can be disposed as waste for incineration, or for autoclaving and shredding. Autoclave tape and bag indicators must be used to show autoclaving has been completed.

Single-use sharps are to be placed into a sharps container, that is rigid-walled and meets the Australian and New Zealand Standards AS 4031 and AS/NZS 4261.

Reusable sharps containers must be readily emptied and cleaned before reuse, in accordance with AS/NZS 4478.

Pharmaceutical waste disposal

Pharmaceutical waste can include patients' unused medications, pharmaceuticals that are unwanted or out-of-date, packages, containers or equipment contaminated by pharmaceutical substances and their residues, and pharmaceutical substances rejected by the manufacturer due to quality control considerations.

Pharmaceutical waste bins must be lockable.

Pharmaceutical waste must be incinerated at a licensed controlled waste facility.

When uncertain about disposing of leftover pharmaceuticals, workers should return them to the pharmacy for safe disposal.

Most disinfectants are to be disposed through the sewer system by running cold water before pouring the disinfectant in to the sink. Once disinfectants are disposed, the cold water should be left running for a few moments to dilute the disinfectant.

Waste handling and storage

Waste should be stored in a dedicated storage area to prevent environmental impacts. Storage areas are to be cleaned regularly and kept free of odour.

Where small quantities of clinical waste are generated, waste storage will be managed using 120/240 litre mobile garbage bins (wheelie bins), or using other waste containers, placed on a tray which has sufficient construction to prevent spills.

Mobile garbage bins must be washable, with a lid that is lockable. Mobile garbage bins must be securely closed during movement, but do not have to be locked, unless the mobile garbage bin is a pharmaceutical waste bin.

Workers should minimise the handling of waste bags and avoid decanting from one bin to another. When clinical waste is being handled, workers should hold bags away from the body by the closed top of the bag and place directly in to the appropriate bin.

Appropriate protective clothing and equipment is to be worn when closing clinical waste bags and placing them in to the bin.

Sharps must never be placed in waste bags.

Waste must never be stored in plastic liners placed directly on floors.

Waste minimisation

Access4u will aim to minimise waste without compromising work standards or client/worker safety.

Access4u strategies may include:

- **Reduction:** through product substitution, product modifications and procedural changes.
- **Re-use:** where clinically appropriate, environmentally sound, practical and cost effective to do so. Items packaged as single-use must never be reused.
- **Recycling:** through increased volumes of recycling and assessment of additional resource recovery programs for implementation.

Incident reporting

Any incident involving infectious material, body substances or hazardous substances is to be reported on Access4u's incident register.

Incidents involving hazardous materials or waste management are also to be reported promptly to the relevant manager. All reported incidents will be internally investigated and reviewed by the incident investigator to determine the cause of the incident, and to improve organisational procedures to reduce future risk.

Emergency plan

Where management issues or accidents occur relating to clinical waste or hazardous substances, the TH Emergency Management Guidebook is to be followed.

Hygiene and cleaning

Access4u will provide hand hygiene facilities for workers and promote regular hygiene procedures that comply with SA Health directions.

Additionally, Access4u will:

- regularly clean and maintain equipment used to contain and transport waste;
- clean all contaminated items as soon as possible, using appropriate detergents and hospital grade disinfectants;
- ensure that when cleaning contaminated items, staff wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including face protection, use a scrubbing brush and avoid splashing the water. If any item of PPE becomes contaminated, the item must be changed before continuing with the task.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Workers must use appropriate PPE when necessary. Access4u will provide all workers who deal with waste and hazardous substances with necessary protective equipment and clothing.

Staff will be trained in the proper selection, fitting, storage and maintenance of PPE.

Worker training

All workers involved in the management of waste and hazardous substances will receive training to ensure safe and appropriate handling of substances. This includes training on:

- protective equipment and clothing required when handling waste or hazardous substances;

Waste Management Policy and Procedure



- approved work practices, including specific waste handling disposal, spill management etc.;
- workplace health and safety information relating to the equipment and chemicals/drugs used in the health service;
- first aid and treatment for needle stick and bloody and body fluid exposure;
- emergency response procedures.

Regular review

This policy is subject to revision, as Access4u will regularly audit and review its waste management processes to ensure they remain effective.