

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING HEALTH CARE WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. Duty Of Care Principle:

Any organisation that generate waste has a duty to dispose of waste safely.

2. Polluter Pays Principle:

All waste producers are legally and financially responsible for the safe handling and environmentally sound disposal of the waste they produce.

3. Precautionary Principle:

One must always assume that waste is hazardous until shown to be safe.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH POOR HEALTH CARE WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Needle stick injuries.
- Unsafe injection practices (reuse of syringes, recapping of needles and no needles maybe reused).
- Spread of diseases / infections such as hepatitis B, C and HIV.
- Pollution resulting from poorly operated treatment facilities.
- Accidental spillages.
- Illegal dumping

SOME GOOD PRACTICES FOR HEALTH CARE WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Continuous awareness, education, information, training and communication on the proper handling, storage, removal, and disposal of health care waste.
- Proper or correct colour coding and segregation practices.
- Wearing of personal protective Equipment (PPE's) when handling and disposal of health care waste.
- Legislative and regulatory frameworks (policy, standard operating procedures, etc.) in place.
- Regular auditing, evaluation and monitoring of health care waste by health care facility and health officials (health care waste officer, environmental health practitioner, occupational health and safety officer and infection prevention and safety control officer).
- Proper record keeping

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HEALTH CARE WASTE MANAGEMENT



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WHAT IS HEALTH CARE WASTE (HCW)?

Means health care general waste and health care risk waste.

WHAT IS HEALTH CARE RISK WASTE (HCRW)?

Means waste capable of producing any disease.

THE CATEGORIES OF HEALTH CARE RISK WASTE (HCRW) INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING

- Infections liquids and infectious waste;
- Pathological / anatomical waste;
- Pharmaceutical waste;
- Chemical waste;
- Waste with a high content of metals;
- Pressurized containers;
- Sharps waste;
- Laboratory waste;
- Genotoxic / cytotoxic waste;
- Radioactive waste;
- Isolation waste.



WHAT IS HEALTH CARE GENERAL WASTE (HCGW)?

Means the non-hazardous component of waste generated by a generator and can include liquids, but excludes health care risk waste.

WHO IS AT RISK OF EXPOSURE TO INCORRECT HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF HEALTH CARE WASTE?

- Medical staff: doctors, nurses, sanitary staff and hospital maintenance personnel.
- In and out-patients receiving treatment in health care facilities as well as their visitors.
- Workers in waste disposal facilities, including reclaimers.
- Workers in support services linked to health care facilities such as laundries, waste handling and transportation services.
- General public.

HEALTH CARE WASTE SOURCES:

- Major sources are: hospitals, clinics, laboratories, blood banks, mortuaries, community health centres, etc.
- Minor sources include: physician offices, dental clinics, pharmacies, etc.

IN WASTE MANAGEMENT, WE OFTEN REFER TO THE “CRADLE TO GRAVE” MANAGEMENT OF WASTE. WHAT IS THE CRADLE TO GRAVE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH CARE WASTE?

The cradle to grave management of health care waste refers to the management of waste right from the beginning of waste production or at the point of generation (i.e. from the ‘cradle’) to its end or final treatment and disposal (i.e. ‘grave’).

THERE ARE EIGHT STEPS IN THE CRADLE TO GRAVE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH CARE WASTE .THESE ARE:

- Step 1: Health care waste minimization
- Step 2: Health care waste generation
- Step 3: Segregation and containerisation of waste
- Step 4: Intermediate storage of waste in a health care facility
- Step 5: Internal transport and collection of waste in a health care facility
- Step 6: Centralized storage of waste in health care facility
- Step 7: External transport and collection of waste off side by service provider
- Step 8: Treatment and final disposal of waste by a treatment facility



waste material