



Ventura County Environmental Health Division

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Medical Waste Definition

California Health and Safety Code, Section 117690 - *Medical Waste*

(a) "Medical waste" means any biohazardous, pathology, pharmaceutical, or trace chemotherapy waste not regulated by the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-580), as amended; sharps and trace chemotherapy wastes generated in a health care setting in the diagnosis, treatment, immunization, or care of humans or animals; waste generated in autopsy or necropsy; waste generated during preparation of a body for final disposition such as cremation or interment; waste generated in research pertaining to the production or testing of microbiologicals; waste generated in research using human or animal pathogens; sharps and laboratory waste that poses a potential risk of infection to humans generated in the inoculation of animals in commercial farming operations; waste generated from the consolidation of home-generated sharps; and waste generated in the cleanup of trauma scenes. Biohazardous, pathology, pharmaceutical, sharps, and trace chemotherapy wastes that meet the conditions of this section are not subject to any of the hazardous waste requirements found in Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 25100) of Division 20.

(b) For purposes of this part the following definitions apply:

(1) "Biohazardous waste" includes all of the following:

(A)

(i) Regulated medical waste, clinical waste, or biomedical waste that is a waste or reusable material derived from the medical treatment of a human or from an animal that is suspected by the attending veterinarian of being infected with a pathogen that is also infectious to humans, which includes diagnosis and immunization; or from biomedical research, which includes the production and testing of biological products.

(ii) Regulated medical waste or clinical waste or biomedical waste suspected of containing a highly communicable disease.

(B) Laboratory waste such as human specimen cultures or animal specimen cultures that are infected with pathogens that are also infectious to humans; cultures and stocks of infectious agents from research; wastes from the production of bacteria, viruses, spores, discarded live and attenuated vaccines used in human health care or research, discarded animal vaccines, including Brucellosis and Contagious Ecthyma, as defined by the department; culture dishes,

devices used to transfer, inoculate, and mix cultures; and wastes identified by Section 173.134 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations as Category B “once wasted” for laboratory wastes.

(C) Waste that, at the point of transport from the generator’s site or at the point of disposal contains recognizable fluid human blood, fluid human blood products, containers, or equipment containing human blood that is fluid, or blood from animals suspected by the attending veterinarian of being contaminated with infectious agents known to be contagious to humans.

(D) Waste containing discarded materials contaminated with excretion, exudate, or secretions from humans or animals that are required to be isolated by the infection control staff, the attending physician and surgeon, the attending veterinarian, or the local health officer, to protect others from highly communicable diseases or diseases of animals that are communicable to humans.

(2) Pathology waste includes both of the following:

(A) Human body parts, with the exception of teeth, removed at surgery and surgery specimens or tissues removed at surgery or autopsy that are suspected by the health care professional of being contaminated with infectious agents known to be contagious to humans or having been fixed in formaldehyde or another fixative.

(B) Animal parts, tissues, fluids, or carcasses suspected by the attending veterinarian of being contaminated with infectious agents known to be contagious to humans.

(3) “Pharmaceutical waste” means a pharmaceutical, as defined in Section 117747, including trace chemotherapy waste, that is a waste, as defined in Section 25124. For purposes of this part, “pharmaceutical waste” does not include a pharmaceutical that meets either of the following criteria:

(A) The pharmaceutical is being sent out of the state to a reverse distributor, as defined in Section 4040.5 of the Business and Professions Code, that is licensed as a wholesaler of dangerous drugs by the California State Board of Pharmacy pursuant to Section 4161 of the Business and Professions Code.

(B) The pharmaceutical is being sent by a reverse distributor, as defined in Section 4040.5 of the Business and Professions Code, offsite for treatment and disposal in accordance with applicable laws, or to a reverse distributor that is licensed as a wholesaler of dangerous drugs by the California State Board of Pharmacy pursuant to Section 4160 of the Business and Professions Code and as a permitted transfer station if the reverse distributor is located within the state.

(4) "Sharps waste" means a device that has acute rigid corners, edges, or protuberances capable of cutting or piercing, including, but not limited to, hypodermic needles, hypodermic needles with syringes, blades, needles with attached tubing, acupuncture needles, root canal files, broken glass items used in health care such as Pasteur pipettes and blood vials contaminated with biohazardous waste, and any item capable of cutting or piercing from trauma scene waste.

(5) "Trace chemotherapeutic waste" means waste that is contaminated through contact with, or having previously contained, chemotherapeutic agents, including, but not limited to, gloves, disposable gowns, towels, and intravenous solution bags and attached tubing that are empty. A biohazardous waste that meets the conditions of this paragraph is not subject to the hazardous waste requirements of Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 25100) of Division 20.

(6) "Trauma scene waste" means waste that is a regulated waste, as defined in Section 5193 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations, and that has been removed, is to be removed, or is in the process of being removed, from a trauma scene by a trauma scene waste management practitioner.

117695 - Treated Medical Waste

Medical waste that has been treated in accordance with the provisions of the Medical Waste Management Act, Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 118215), and that is not otherwise hazardous, shall thereafter be considered solid waste as defined in Section 40191 of the Public Resources Code and not medical waste.

117700 - Not Medical Waste

Medical waste does not include any of the following:

(a) Waste generated in food processing or biotechnology that does not contain an infectious agent, as defined in Section 117675, or an agent capable of causing an infection that is highly communicable, as defined in Section 117665.

(b) Waste generated in biotechnology that does not contain human blood or blood products or animal blood or blood products suspected of being contaminated with infectious agents known to be communicable to humans or a highly communicable disease.

(c) Urine, feces, saliva, sputum, nasal secretions, sweat, tears, or vomitus, unless it contains visible or recognizable fluid blood, as provided in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 117690.

(d) Waste which is not biohazardous, such as paper towels, paper products, articles containing nonfluid blood, and other medical solid waste products commonly found in the facilities of medical waste generators.

(e) Hazardous waste, radioactive waste, or household waste, including, but not limited to, home-generated sharps waste, as defined in Section 117671.

(f) Waste generated from normal and legal veterinarian, agricultural, and animal livestock management practices on a farm or ranch unless otherwise specified in law.