
Overview

This standard concerns disposing of healthcare waste, including sharps, in such a way that you minimise the risks of acquiring and spreading infections. The standard applies to activities that take place in any health and social care environment, including community and domiciliary settings, and ambulance care settings.

Healthcare waste is produced as a result of healthcare activities and includes potentially hazardous substances that may cause infection to any person coming into contact with them.

The standard should be used alongside relevant legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols.

You should adhere to the national regulations and policies, including descriptions of types of waste, that apply to your country.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. access and accurately interpret all relevant work instructions and information
2. work safely at all times and in accordance with all relevant legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols
3. deal promptly and effectively with any problems within your control and report those which cannot be solved
4. identify and minimise hazards and risk in the workplace
5. communicate with the individual and key people at a pace, in a manner and at a level appropriate to the individual's understanding, preferences and needs
6. respect the individual's rights and wishes relating to their privacy, beliefs, and dignity
7. provide support to the individual and carers and ensure health and safety measures are implemented at all times
8. use appropriate personal protective equipment when you are handling used sharps and other healthcare waste in accordance with organisational requirements
9. encourage individuals to dispose of their own waste when they are able to do so safely, and provide them with appropriate receptacles and information for this
10. segregate healthcare waste into appropriate streams and receptacles for safe disposal referring to organisational requirements
11. dispose of healthcare waste as soon as possible, as close to the point of use into the appropriate waste receptacle, ensuring the correct use of any inbuilt safety features
12. perform effective hand hygiene after handling waste, and enable individuals who have disposed of their own waste also to perform effective hand hygiene
13. seal waste receptacles safely and arrange for them to be removed and replaced with fresh receptacles in line with health and safety regulations and local policy/procedures
14. ensure the point of origin of the waste is clearly marked on containers by an appropriate tag, tape or label, so that it is clear what they contain, following recognised codes
15. if any spillages of waste occur, clean, with or without disinfection as soon as possible in accordance with local/national policies/procedures
16. ensure that waste containers are not overfilled, are kept clean and secure and

in good repair and working order

17. ensure waste is not left accessible to unauthorized persons or pests
18. dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
19. complete and store all relevant documentation in accordance with organisational requirements

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the current legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols which are relevant to your work practice and to which you must adhere
2. the scope and limitations of your own competence, responsibilities and accountability as it applies to your job role
3. how to access and interpret all relevant work instructions and information
4. specific procedures for reporting issues which are beyond your competence, responsibilities and accountability
5. the duty to report any acts or omissions that could be unsafe/detrimental to you or others
6. the hazards and risks which may arise during the execution of your work role and how you can minimise these
7. how to adapt communication styles in ways which are appropriate to the needs of the individual
8. the correct use of any equipment and PPE to protect the health and safety of you and others
9. the needs of individuals and carers including issues relating to dignity, confidentiality, and privacy
10. the chain of infection
11. hierarchy of controls
12. the key moments of hand hygiene
13. how approaches in clinical and social environments may differ
14. how to access facilities for hand hygiene
15. effective techniques for maintaining hand hygiene
16. the range of personal protective equipment for activities within your job role
17. how to safely and effectively clean, with or without disinfection, following leakages or spills
18. how to safely put on, remove and dispose of personal protective equipment
19. how to handle and dispose of sharps safely
20. how to segregate different types of waste appropriately and safely using the colour-coded bags and waste receptacles available and the correct use of each
21. how to distinguish between single-use, single-individual use, and reusable equipment and/or personal protective equipment and how to dispose, launder, clean, disinfect or store them, safely

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22. safe transport of sharps when not contaminated
 23. safe storage of sharps to ensure they don't cause accidental injury
 24. how and when to report any issues
 25. how to dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
 26. how to complete and safely store all relevant documentation in accordance with organisational requirements

SFHIPC7

Safely dispose of healthcare waste, including sharps, to prevent the spread of infection



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