



## Community Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for General Practice

(also suitable for adoption by other healthcare providers,  
e.g. Dental Practice, Podiatry)

# Waste management

WASTE MANAGEMENT

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# WASTE MANAGEMENT

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

### 1. Introduction

The management of healthcare waste is an essential part of ensuring that General Practice activities do not pose a risk or potential risk of infection and are appropriately managed. Waste is potentially hazardous and if not disposed of correctly can result in injury or infection.

All staff are responsible for the safe management and disposal of waste and should understand how waste should be segregated and stored prior to collection or disposal. This is driven by the need to reduce environmental impact, comply with waste regulations and other national guidance such as the *Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance*, and reduce costs associated with waste management.

### 2. Responsibilities

Staff in General Practice have a responsibility for ensuring that waste is dealt with appropriately from the point of generation to the point of final disposal. All staff should be trained and aware of waste procedures. It remains the legal responsibility of the General Practice, not the waste contractor, to ensure full compliance with environmental waste regulations. Waste should be:

- Correctly segregated
- Appropriately labelled
- Packaged appropriately for transportation
- Stored safely and in a secure place away from areas of public access within the premise
- Described accurately and fully on the accompanying documentation when removed from the premise
- Transferred to an authorised waste contractor for transport to an authorised waste disposal site

### 3. Disposal of waste

- All waste should be segregated correctly as per your local policy and in accordance with your waste contractor.
- When handling waste, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn.

- All waste bags should be no more than 2/3 full. This allows enough space for the bag to be tied using a suitable plastic zip tie or secure knot.
- Waste bags should be labelled with the address and date prior to collection by the waste contractor (some waste contractors may undertake this) to ensure traceability if an incident occurs.
- When handling tied waste bags, only hold the bag by the neck and keep at arms length to reduce the risk of injury in case a sharp item has been inappropriately disposed of in the bag.
- If a waste bag awaiting collection is torn, the torn bag and contents should be placed inside a new waste bag.

#### 4. Assessing waste for segregation

General Practice waste should be assessed by the member of staff at the time the waste is produced and segregated in the correct colour waste stream identified below. Further information can be found in the *Environment and sustainability Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe management of healthcare waste*.

Guide for correct colour waste streams		
Colour waste stream and disposal type	Container type	Description
<b>Yellow:</b> <b>Infectious waste</b> for incineration in a suitably permitted or licensed facility (must not be sent for alternative treatment)	Yellow bag or yellow lidded sharps container	<b>Waste classified as infectious</b> Waste contaminated with body fluids from a patient with a known or suspected infection which poses a potential infection risk and there are also medicines or chemicals present.  Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anatomical wastes and tissue samples preserved in hazardous chemicals</li> <li>• Medicines, medicinally-contaminated syringes, medicated dressings</li> <li>• Contaminated dressings that contains an active pharmaceutical, e.g. ibuprofen</li> <li>• Diagnostic kits contaminated with potentially infectious body fluids and chemical reagents (this does not include sticks from dip tests)</li> </ul>

Guide for correct colour waste streams		
Colour waste stream and disposal type	Container type	Description
<p><b>Orange: Infectious waste</b> can be sent for treatment to render it safe prior to disposal or incinerated in a permitted or licensed facility</p>	Orange bag or orange lidded sharps container	<p><b>Waste classified as infectious</b> Waste contaminated with body fluids from a patient with a known or suspected infection, but no contamination with medicines or chemicals.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contaminated PPE (gloves, aprons, etc.)</li> <li>Contaminated dressings that do not contain an active pharmaceutical</li> <li>Very small pieces of tissue</li> <li>Syringe bodies contaminated with body fluids, but not medicines</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yellow and black striped: Offensive/hygiene waste</b> may be landfilled in a permitted or licenced waste facility</p> <p><i>Note: Liquids, e.g. urine, faeces, vomit, should not be placed in this waste stream and may need to be discarded to foul sewer before containers are discarded</i></p>	Yellow and black striped bag	<p><b>Waste classified as offensive (non-hazardous)</b> Waste from patients with no known or suspected infection which may be contaminated with body fluids.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gloves, aprons</li> <li>Dressings (including blood stained)</li> <li>Empty non-medicated infusion bags</li> <li>Stoma or catheter bags</li> <li>Cardboard vomit/urine bowls</li> <li>Incontinence pads</li> <li>Female hygiene waste, nappies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purple: Cytotoxic or cytostatic medicine waste</b> or any items contaminated with these must be sent for incineration in a permitted or licenced</p>	Purple bag or yellow and purple striped bag. Purple lidded sharps container	<p><b>Waste classified as hazardous</b> consisting of, or contaminated with, cytotoxic and/or cytostatic medicines.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medicine containers with residues of cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines (bottles, infusion bags or syringe barrels)</li> </ul>

### Guide for correct colour waste streams

Colour waste stream and disposal type	Container type	Description
waste facility		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Items contaminated with cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines, e.g. swabs</li> <li>Used sharps from treatment using cytotoxic or cytostatic medicines</li> </ul>
<b>Blue:</b> <b>Medicinal waste</b> non-hazardous medicinal waste for incineration in a permitted or licenced waste facility	Blue lidded sharps container	<b>Waste classified as non-hazardous medicinal waste</b> (non-cytotoxic or cytostatic). Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unused medicines in original packages</li> <li>Part empty containers containing residues of medicines</li> <li>Empty medicine bottles</li> </ul>
<b>Black:</b> <b>Domestic waste</b> for landfill at a suitable permitted facility	Black bag (clear or opaque bags may be used)	Includes items normally found in household waste. Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newspapers</li> <li>Food waste</li> <li>Paper towels</li> <li>Uncontaminated couch roll</li> <li>Packaging</li> </ul>

## 5. Infection Prevention and Control resources, education and training

The Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team have produced a wide range of innovative educational and IPC resources designed to assist your Practice in achieving compliance with the *Health and Social Care Act 2008* and CQC registration requirements.

These resources are either free to download from the website or available at a minimal cost covering administration and printing:

- Over 20 IPC Guidance documents (Policies) for General Practice
- 'Preventing Infection Workbook for General Practice'

- 'IPC CQC Inspection Preparation Pack for General Practice'
- IPC audit tools, posters, leaflets and factsheets
- 'IPC Advice Bulletin for GP Practice Staff'

In addition, we hold educational study events in North Yorkshire and can arrange bespoke training packages and 'Mock IPC CQC Inspections'. Prices vary depending on your requirements and location.

Further information on these high quality evidence-based resources is available at [www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk).

## 6. References

Department of Health (2015) *The Health and Social Act 2008. Code of Practice for the Prevention and control of healthcare associated infections*

Department of Health (2013) *Environment and sustainability Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe management of healthcare waste*

Department of Health (2011) *Safe management of healthcare waste Version 2.0: England*

Royal College of Nursing (2014) *The management of waste from health, social and personal care RCN guidance*