

# ILLEGAL DUMPING OF INFECTIOUS WASTE

New Mexico environment department



## About myself

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- Provide education and outreach to communities to help prevent illegal dumping and ensure proper scrap tire management
- Former employers include Capitol Area Council of Governments – Austin, TX, City of San Marcos, TX, and Texas State University
- Bachelors Degree in Environmental Science – Texas State University

## Outline

- What is infectious waste?
- Where does infectious waste come from?
- How to clean up infectious waste at solid waste facilities
- How to clean up infectious waste at illegal dumpsites
- Used needle management

## ITS GONNA GET GROSS!!!



## Special Waste

### 20.9.2.7.S(13) NMAC

“special waste” means solid waste that has unique handling, transportation or disposal requirements to assure protection of the environment and the public health, welfare and safety...

## Special Waste

Special Waste INCLUDES:

- Treated formerly characteristic hazardous wastes (TFCH)
- Packing house and killing plant offal
- Regulated asbestos waste
- Ash
- **Infectious waste (“regulated medical waste” or “RMW”)**
- Sludge
- Industrial Solid Waste (those that require special management)
- Spill of a chemical substance or commercial product
- Petroleum contaminated soils
- Oil Conservation Division (“OCD”) wastes
- Other wastes with unique handling, transportation and disposal requirements

## Infectious Waste Definition

### 20.9.2.7.I(5) NMAC

“Infectious waste” means a solid waste that carries a probable risk of transmitting disease to humans or animals”

Includes.....

## Infectious Waste Definition

Cultures from medical, pathological, research, or industrial laboratories



### Infectious Waste Definition

#### Human Pathological Wastes

Tissues, organs, and body parts that are removed during surgery, autopsy, other medical procedures, or laboratory procedures, but not including hair, or nails



### Infectious Waste Definition

#### Human and Body Fluid Waste

Bags from blood transfusions, items from trauma scenes, byproducts of surgeries and procedures, plasma center by products, liquid waste human blood, blood products



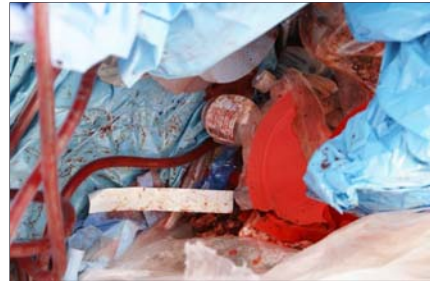
### Infectious Waste Definition

#### Contaminated Animal Carcasses



### Infectious Waste Definition

biological wastes and waste contaminated with bloody excretions, exudates, or secretions from:



## Infectious Waste Definition

Discarded sharps, used or unused (unless in original packaging)



## Where does infectious waste come from?

- Hospitals
- Urgent Care facilities
- Dialysis clinics
- Free clinics
- Home health agencies
- Surgical Clinics
- Medical buildings
- Physician offices



## Where does infectious waste come from?

- Blood/plasma centers
- Laboratories
- Acute Psychiatric Hospitals
- Veterinarians
- Dental offices
- Acupuncturists
- Funeral Homes
- Eye Clinics
- Tattoo/piercing parlors



## Infectious waste found at SW facility

Waste Screening:

1. Find it before it is unloaded, tell driver it is not accepted.

But "once it touches the ground" the facility owns it, and has to assure cleanup.



## Infectious waste found at SW facility

Once it touches the ground:

1. Restrict the area from public access and from facility personnel
2. Try and find out who left it!
  - Ask Truck driver, facility operator, gate house personnel.
  - Find contact information on waste itself
  - Try to identify generator
3. Notify NMED, the hauler, and the generator in writing within 48 hours
4. Assure proper cleanup, transport and disposal of the waste

**NMAC 20.9.5.8 B (5)**

## How should IW dumps get cleaned up?

Infectious waste illegal dumping is uncommon

Most medical establishments have agreements with registered haulers



## How should IW dumps get cleaned up?

1. Containerize and isolate!

Must have proper equipment and PPE

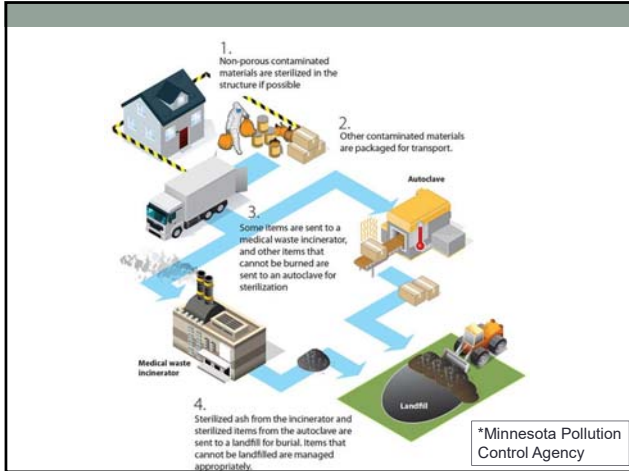


## How should IW dumps get cleaned up?

2. Assure proper cleanup

Only a registered infectious waste hauler can remove the infectious waste from the site where it is found!





**How should IW dumps get cleaned up?**

3. Call Authorities, NMED

(encouraged)  
Source of waste can sometimes be found!

# USED NEEDLES

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**Used needles**

**Why are used needles dangerous?**  
Used needles and lancets are dangerous because they can:

- Injure people
- Spread germs
- Spread diseases such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, tetanus, and syphilis

## How to dispose of used needles

### Do NOT:

- Throw loose needles in the garbage
- Flush used needles down the toilet
- Put needles in recycling containers



## How to dispose of used needles

### Recommended Used needle disposal options:

Drop off collection site

- Often Free
- May be found at hospitals, doctor offices, health clinics, pharmacies, health departments, and police and fire departments



City of Calgary



City of Portland

## How to dispose of used needles

### Recommended Used needle disposal options:

Syringe exchange program

- Lets you trade used needles for used ones
- Many Counties and Municipalities in New Mexico offer this service



## How to dispose of used needles

### Recommended Used needle disposal options:

Mail back programs

- Great for home-generated needles (diabetes) and needles found by municipalities in public parks and by businesses on their property
- Cost depends on size of container
- Totally legal
- Company offers box with mail-back kit



## How to dispose of used needles

### Recommended Used needle disposal options:

Home needle destruction devices

- Destroys needle and makes it safe to throw in garbage
- Before buying a device, make sure it is approved by FDA



## Conclusion

### For more information:

Special Waste: [www.env.nm.gov/swb/SpecialWasteMgt](http://www.env.nm.gov/swb/SpecialWasteMgt)

Used Needles: [www.env.nm.gov/swb/UsedNeedles](http://www.env.nm.gov/swb/UsedNeedles)

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## Infectious Waste at Landfills

- Has never come across a case where a hospital has egregiously dumped infectious waste.
- 2 or 3 instances where red bags have been found along the roadway where it has fallen off a car.
- Some clinic might close and they throw sharps and stuff into municipal bin.
- He has never seen it done with intent
- Bigger issue is in the communities where people are haphazardly discard their used needles
- Home health care provider needs to remove waste in an appropriate way.
- Contaminated animal carcasses might come from labs that use primates injected with pathogens for testing, also canines. Even bedding in this case is considered infectious waste.
- If a facility SW comes across a sharps container fancy, it should be removed and managed as infectious waste. Unless it is obviously generated by a home.
- Mailback things may not have a manifest. There might not be a manifesting system. Regulated facilities are the ones who should not be using mail back systems. J
- Businesses are looked at similarly as homes. Biz's can dispose of them through mailback systems, or pick up services, or just even in their MSW (though its not recommended).

- If infectious waste IS dumped at a facility, they have to implement their waste screening, IW management plan. Chuck always references 5.8.B5C that the owner/operator is responsible to assure proper cleanup transport and disposal. The stuff should be isolated (roped off) they should attempt to determine by asking truck driver, house operator, and phone call whoever they think generator is. tHEY should express to gen that it is unauthorized waste and they need (as an emergency) them to send a crew to properly containerize this and remove it. Then the hospital will (ideally) send staff right over to clean it up, then they will contact hauler and arrange for pickup/cleanup. Then they have to make sure the manifest has the discrepancy block filled out, so that the manifest makes sense. Then LF needs to make sure they do an incident report. They are REQUESTED to immediately contact NMED enforcement SWB.



- Call from guy about needles under a bridge.
- Usually he gets calls from landfills a bout loads
- When they do find infectious waste, they isolate it, they may open it r wait for EO to open it ad try to figure out where it came from. Usually that's possile. There might be stuff written on paper (prescriptions) or it might e obvious if it is a small community. You could even he was able to track it all the way to te household it came from.
- Most landfills keep a real close eye.
- Fines for hopitals can go into thousands, like 8-12 thousand.
- You have to use a registered special waste transporter for infectious waste. It has to be manifested. Forms available online.
- He rarely gets calls about infectious waste.

- First isolate it (cones, yellow tape, keep things and people out)
- Contact correct authority (depends on where you find it, private, public property)
- Call us NMED
- Arrange for proper transport and disposal
- Hauler has to be registered to specifically haul infectious waste
  - Stericycle (transport and disposal) expensive but they do it well
  - E strategies
  - There is also a company where you can mail infectious waste and they will dispose of it (may not be around anymore)
  - Look online (clean harbors)
- Common violations in hospitals
  - Failure to tie off bags
  - Failure to put bags in containers and keeping them closed when not in use
- Registered contractor (like stericycle) would clean up AND haul.
- If its along the road, its DOT.
- Does not include waste generated by a household.
- Call Stericycle or drop it off at State drop off