



This document contains training materials supplied to UCSB EH&S by environmental scientists from the Medical Waste Management Program at the California Department of Public Health.

The training materials summarize California state requirements for medical waste containment, storage, and transport.



## Medical Waste Storage Labeling, Holding Times and Treatment Methods

Medical Waste Stream	Primary Container to be disposed into	“Transport” or secondary Container	“Transport” or Secondary Container Labeling	Holding Time and Conditions Onsite	Treatment Method
<b>Biohazardous Waste</b> (bloody items, gauze, soiled gowns / gloves, suction canisters with bloody fluids) 	Labeled biohazardous waste container or acceptable “kick-bucket” lined with a red biohazard bag. (Trauma/ER only)  <b>LABELED:</b> “Biohazardous Waste” or “BIOHAZARD” with international biohazard symbol.	Secured red bag in the secondary transport container that is rigid with a tight fitting lid and lined with a red bag.	Labeled on lid and sides visible from any lateral direction with “Biohazardous Waste” or “BIOHAZARD” with the international biohazard symbol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At &gt;0°C, ≥ 20 pounds / month, shall store ≤ 7 days</li> <li>At &gt;0°C, &lt; 20 pounds shall contain or store ≤ 30 days</li> <li>At ≤ 0°C, any amount may be stored up to 90 days.</li> </ul>	<b>Steam Sterilization</b>  Must be treated within 7 days from onsite removal
<b>Sharps Waste</b> (needles, broken glass vials, blades, clips, pins, trocars, empty carpullets, & syringes with trace amount of medication) 	Sharps waste container (Sharps “containers”, not individual sharp/needle, may be placed in red biohazard bags).  <b>LABELED:</b> Sharps Waste <b>and</b> “BIOHAZARD” with international biohazard symbol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharps waste container in a red biohazard bag in a rigid container with a tight fitting lid, or</li> <li>Individual sharps waste container by itself.</li> </ul>	Labeled on lid and sides visible from any lateral direction with “Biohazardous Waste” or “BIOHAZARD” with the international biohazard symbol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At &gt;0°C, any amount may be stored ≤ 30 days</li> <li>At ≤ 0°C, any amount may be stored up to 90 days.</li> </ul>	<b>Steam Sterilization</b>  Must be treated within 7 days from onsite removal
<b>Chemotherapy Waste</b> 	Chemotherapy waste container.  <b>LABELED:</b> “Chemotherapy Waste” or “CHEMO” with “INCINERATION ONLY”.	Chemotherapy waste transport container by itself (must be a rigid container with a tight fitting lid).	Labeled on lid and sides visible from any lateral direction with “Chemotherapy Waste” or “CHEMO” and “INCINERATION ONLY”. (No symbol). For chemo sharps needs sharps symbol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At &gt;0°C, ≥ 20 pounds / month, shall contain or store ≤ (7) days</li> <li>At &gt;0°C, &lt; 20 pounds shall contain or store ≤ 30 days</li> <li>At ≤ 0°C, any amount may be stored up to 90 days.</li> </ul>	<b>Incineration</b>  Must be treated within 30 days from onsite removal
<b>Pathology Waste</b> 	Pathology waste container lined with a red biohazard bag.  <b>LABELED:</b> “Pathology Waste” or “PATH” with INCINERATION ONLY	Pathology waste transport container by itself (must be a rigid container with a tight fitting lid).	Labeled on lid and sides visible from any lateral direction with “Pathology Waste” or “PATH” and “INCINERATION ONLY”. (No symbol requirement).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At &gt;0°C, ≥ 20 pounds / month, shall contain or store ≤ (7) days</li> <li>At &gt;0°C, &lt; 20 pounds shall contain or store ≤ 30 days</li> <li>At ≤ 0°C, any amount may be stored up to 90 days.</li> </ul>	<b>Incineration</b>  Must be treated within 30 days from onsite removal
<b>Pharmaceutical Waste</b> (All syringes, vials with residual medication, pills) 	Pharmaceutical waste container.  <b>LABELED:</b> “INCINERATION ONLY”.	Pharmaceutical waste transport container by itself (must be a rigid container with a tight fitting lid).  <b>Unopened/Unused or expired – Return to Pharmacy</b>	Labeled on lid and sides visible from any lateral direction with “INCINERATION ONLY”. (No symbol requirement).	Pharmaceutical waste containers (not temperature relevant): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if full, ≤ 90 days.</li> <li>if not full, once per year.</li> </ul>	<b>Incineration</b>  Must be treated within 30 days from onsite removal

If odor presents a nuisance, more frequent removal is required.

Reference: HSC Sections 118275, 118280, 118285

For off-sites or transfer stations, all waste from the generators may be stored for ≤ 30 days at ≤ 0°C, or ≤ 7 days at > 0°C from the time of pickup from the generators to the start of treatment.

Medical Waste Stream	Acceptable Containers for Generation	Acceptable Transportation Methods	Acceptable Storage Containers / Methods
<p><b>Biohazardous Waste (Red Biohazard Bags)</b></p> 	<p>(Biohazardous waste containers shall be lined with a red biohazard bag)</p>	 <p>Biohazardous containers may be transported on flatbed carts:</p> 	

Medical Waste Stream	Acceptable Containers for Generation	Acceptable Transportation Methods	Acceptable Storage Containers / Methods
<p><b>Sharps Waste Containers</b></p>	<p>(DO NOT line sharps waste containers)</p>  	<p>If sharps containers are placed into a red biohazard bag than it shall be treated as a red biohazard bag as biohazardous waste and transported in a rigid container with a tight fitting cover labeled with the biohazard symbol and the words "BIOHAZARD" on the lid and all visible sides. SEE ABOVE FOR ACCEPTABLE TRANSPORTATION METHODS</p> <p>If sharps containers are NOT in a red biohazard bag BUT are transported in an enclosed secondary container than it shall be a rigid container with a tight fitting lid labeled with the biohazard symbol and the words "BIOHAZARD" on the lid and all visible sides. Sealed sharps containers may be placed in the same container with secured red biohazard bags. SEE ABOVE FOR ACCEPTABLE TRANSPORTATION METHODS</p> <p>If sharps containers are <u>NOT</u> placed into a red biohazard bag; <u>sharps containers</u> may be transported as is individually OR on a flatbed cart such as these:</p> 	<p>If sharps containers are placed into a red biohazard bag than it shall be treated as a red biohazard bag as biohazardous waste and transported in a rigid container with a tight fitting cover labeled with the biohazard symbol and the words "BIOHAZARD" on the lid and all visible sides. SEE ABOVE FOR ACCEPTABLE STORAGE CONTAINERS</p> <p>If sharps containers are placed into a secondary container for storage than it shall be a rigid container with a tight fitting lid labeled with the biohazard symbol and the words BIOHAZARD on the lid and all visible sides. SEE ABOVE FOR ACCEPTABLE STORAGE CONTAINERS</p> <p>If sharps containers are <u>NOT</u> in a red biohazard bag than it can be placed individually next to other medical waste containers in the storage area.</p> 

Medical Waste Stream	Acceptable Containers for Generation	Acceptable Transportation Methods	Acceptable Storage Containers / Methods
<p><b>Pathology Waste</b></p>	<p>(Pathology waste containers shall be lined with a red biohazard bag)</p>   	<p>Red biohazard bags used for pathology waste shall be transported in an enclosed secondary container it shall be rigid with a tight fitting lid labeled "PATH" or "Pathology Waste" on the lid and all visible sides.</p>  <p>Pathology containers may be transported on flatbed carts:</p> 	<p>Red biohazard bags used for pathology waste shall be stored in an enclosed secondary container it shall be rigid with a tight fitting lid labeled "PATH" or "Pathology Waste" on the lid and all visible sides.</p>  

Medical Waste Stream	Acceptable Containers for Generation	Acceptable Transportation Methods	Acceptable Storage Containers / Methods
<p><b>Pharmaceutical Waste</b></p>	<p>(DO NOT line or place pharmaceutical containers in a red biohazard bag)</p>  	<p>Pharmaceutical containers shall NOT be placed in a red biohazard bag.</p> <p>If pharmaceutical containers are transported in an enclosed secondary container it shall be rigid with a tight fitting lid labeled INCINERATION ONLY on the lid and all visible sides.</p>  <p>Pharmaceutical containers may be transported on flatbed carts:</p> 	<p>If pharmaceutical containers are placed in a secondary container it shall be rigid with a tight fitting lid labeled INCINERATION ONLY on the lid and all visible sides.</p>  <p>Pharmaceutical containers may be individually placed next to other medical waste containers.</p> 

Medical Waste Stream	Acceptable Containers for Generation	Acceptable Transportation Methods	Acceptable Storage Containers / Methods
<p><b>Chemotherapy Waste</b></p>	<p>Single-Use Chemo Sharps Containers: (DO NOT line chemo sharps containers)</p>  <p>Reusable Chemo Containers: (Shall be lined with a red biohazard bag)</p> 	<p>Chemo sharps containers may be transported as is individually or if multiple pick up, you may use a flatbed cart (see below).</p> <p>If chemo sharps containers are transported in an enclosed secondary container than it shall a rigid container with a tight fitting lid labeled with the words "CHEMO" or "Chemotherapy Waste" on the lid and all visible sides.</p> <p>Red biohazard bags lining reusable chemo waste containers shall be transported in an enclosed secondary container, it shall be rigid with a tight fitting lid labeled "CHEMO" or "Chemotherapy Waste" on the lid and all visible sides.</p>  <p><u>Chemo containers</u> may be transported on flatbed carts:</p> 	<p>If chemo sharps containers are placed in a secondary container it shall be rigid with a tight fitting lid labeled "CHEMO" or "Chemotherapy Waste" on the lid and all visible sides.</p> <p>Red biohazard bags used for chemo waste shall be placed in a secondary container it shall be rigid with a tight fitting lid labeled "CHEMO" or "Chemotherapy Waste" on the lid and all visible sides.</p>  <p>Chemo sharps containers may be individually placed next to other medical waste containers.</p> 

# ACCEPTABLE BIOHAZARDOUS WASTE CONTAINERS



# The **CORRECT** way to tie the bag



Always wear gloves



Bag shouldn't be more than 1/2 full



Twist the top



Tie a knot

# The **WRONG** way to tie the bag



A butterfly knot leaves more of a chance of leakage

## Examples of good laboratory table top containers for red bagged waste.



Nalgene 6370-0004 Biohazardous Waste Container, Polypropylene (PP), 1.5-Gallon

By [Nalgene](#)



An example of a  
**Biohazardous Waste Container**  
or  
**Biohazardous Waste Transport Container**



### **Medical Waste Management Act**

#### *118280 - Containment and Storage*

To containerize biohazard bags, a person shall do all of the following:

- (a) The bags shall be tied to prevent leakage or expulsion of contents during all future storage, handling, or transport.
- (b) **Biohazardous waste**, except biohazardous waste as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 117635, **shall be bagged in accordance with subdivision (b) of Section 118275 and placed for storage, handling, or transport in a rigid container which may be disposable, reusable, or recyclable. Containers shall be leak resistant, have tight-fitting covers, and be kept clean and in good repair. Containers may be recycled with the approval of the enforcement agency. Containers may be of any color and shall be labeled with the words "Biohazardous Waste" or with the international biohazard symbol and the word "BIOHAZARD" on the lid and on the sides so as to be visible from any lateral direction.**



Biohazardous waste, except biohazardous waste as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 117635, shall be placed in a **red biohazard bag** conspicuously labeled with the words "Biohazardous Waste" or with the international biohazard symbol and the word "BIOHAZARD" [HSC section 118275(b)].

