




Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Answer
What is "medical waste" or "potentially infectious" material?	"Medical waste" means any biohazardous, sharps, or pharmaceutical generated in a health care setting in the diagnosis, treatment, immunization, or care of humans or animals; 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 and waste generated from the consolidation of home-generated sharps. It excludes hazardous waste and household waste.
What goes in the red biohazard bag?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibly bloody gloves, plastic tubing, or personal protective equipment (PPE) • Gauze, bandages, or other items saturated with blood • Securely closed disposable sharps container
What DOES NOT go into a red biohazard bag:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical waste generators are legally responsible for packaging the medical waste; containers shall comply with USDOT requirements when prepared for transport offsite from the facility. • Medication, hazardous waste, radioactive waste, chemical waste, fixatives and preservatives • Compressed gas cylinders (it is hazardous waste - chemical propellant) • Loose sharps (loose sharps are disposed into a sharps container) • Biotech or food processing waste that does not contain a potentially infectious agent • Household waste, food, paper products, and solid waste (trash) • Urine, feces, saliva, sputum, nasal secretions, sweat, tears, or vomitus, unless it contains fluid blood
How do I package my red biohazard bag?	<p>Step 1: Line your biohazardous waste container with the red biohazard bag prior to use.</p> <p>Step 2: Tie the bag when the biohazardous waste container is full.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each red biohazard bag must be hand tied by gathering and twisting the neck of the bag to create a single knot. Refer to poster. <p>Step 3: Secure the lid onto the biohazardous waste container.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure all closure and/or locking mechanisms are engaged. Red biohazard bags must not be visible once the container is closed.
How should the (final) biohazard bag be marked?	The biohazard bag that is prepared for transport offsite shall be certified ASTM 1709 and ASTM 1922. Less stringent unmarked biohazard bags may be placed into the certified biohazard bag that is prepared for transport offsite. Only the final biohazard bag that is transported on the public road is required to be marked and certified ASTM 1709 and ASTM 1922.
What goes in a 'sharps container'?	Sharps waste. "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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO NOT place pharmaceutical waste into a 'sharps container'.
How do I package my sharps waste?	<p>Step 1: Place sharps waste into a 'sharps container' that is a rigid puncture-resistant container designed for sharps waste. Do not allow loose sharps waste in any waste container other than a 'sharps container'.</p> <p>Step 2: Securely close the 'sharps container'.</p> <p>Step 3: Place disposable 'sharps container' in the red biohazard bag or place the 'sharps container' directly into the biohazardous waste container for the scheduled pickup.</p>
How should Pharmaceutical Waste Containers be labeled?	The container shall be labeled with the words "HIGH HEAT" or "INCINERATION ONLY" to ensure proper treatment.
How do we handle controlled substances?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facility is responsible for ensuring that controlled substances are non-retrievable. • Use a pharmaceutical waste container labeled "Incineration Only". • DO NOT use a 'sharps container' solely intended for sharps waste. • Crush pills and squirt liquid controlled substances into the pharmaceutical waste container. • Please use an absorbent material at the bottom of the pharmaceutical waste container to absorb any free flowing liquid.

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
Biohazardous Waste (bloody items, gauze, soiled gowns / gloves, suction canisters with bloody fluids) 	Labeled biohazardous waste container lined with a red biohazard bag. LABELED: "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"> • At >0°C, ≥ 20 pounds / month, shall contain or store ≤ 7 days* • At >0°C, < 20 pounds shall contain or store ≤ 30 days • At ≤ 0°C, any amount may be stored up to 90 days. 	Steam Sterilization or approved Alt Tech
Sharps Waste (needles, broken glass vials, blades, clips, pins, trocars, empty carpulets & syringes with trace amount of medication) 	Sharps waste container (Sharps "containers", not individual sharp/needle, may be placed in red biohazard bags). LABELED: "Sharps Waste" or "BIOHAZARD" with international biohazard symbol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharps waste container in a red biohazard bag in a rigid container with a tight fitting lid, or • Individual sharps waste container by itself. 	Label sharps containers with the words "sharps waste" or with the international biohazard symbol and the word "BIOHAZARD".	Closed sharps containers ready for disposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At >0°C, any amount may be stored ≤ 30 days* • At ≤ 0°C, any amount may be stored up to 90 days. 	Steam Sterilization or approved Alt Tech
Pharmaceutical Waste (All syringes, vials with residual medication, pills) 	Pharmaceutical waste container. LABELED: "HIGH HEAT" or "INCINERATION ONLY". Controlled substances must be rendered non-retrievable.	Pharmaceutical waste transport container by itself (must be a rigid container with a tight fitting lid). Unopened/Unused or expired – Return to Pharmacy	Labeled on lid and sides visible from any lateral direction with "HIGH HEAT" or "INCINERATION ONLY". (No biohazard symbol required unless comingling sharps and pharmaceuticals).	Pharmaceutical waste containers (not temperature relevant): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if full, ≤ 90 days* • if not full, once per year. 	Incineration

The **CORRECT** way to tie the bag



Always wear gloves



Bag shouldn't be more than ½ full



Twist the top



Tie a knot