



Small Generators of Infectious Waste

This guidance document provides an overview of Ohio's infectious waste regulations applicable to small generators of infectious waste. The scope of the infectious waste regulations includes waste segregation, management, storage, and treatment of infectious wastes generated or disposed of in Ohio.

Who is a small generator of infectious waste?

Any business that generates infectious waste is considered an infectious waste generator and is subject to Ohio's infectious waste regulations. An infectious waste generator is classified as a small generator when less than 50 pounds of infectious waste are generated per calendar month.

Definitions

"Infectious agent" means a type of microorganism, pathogen, virus or prions that can cause or significantly contribute to disease in or death of human beings.

"Zoonotic agent" means a type of microorganism, pathogen, virus or prion that causes disease in vertebrate animals, is transmissible to human beings and can cause or significantly contribute to disease in or death of human beings.

"Infectious waste" means any wastes or combination of wastes that include cultures and stocks of infectious agents and associated biological, human blood and blood products, and substances that were or are likely to have been exposed to or contaminated with or are likely to transmit an infectious agent or zoonotic agent, including the following:

- laboratory wastes;
- pathological wastes;
- animal blood and blood products;
- animal carcasses and parts;
- waste materials from the rooms of humans, or the enclosures of animals, that have been isolated because of a diagnosed communicable disease;
- sharp wastes used in the treatment of human beings or animals, or sharp wastes that have or are likely to have come in contact with infectious agents;
- waste materials generated in the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of human beings or animals, research pertaining to the immunization of human beings or animals, or in the production or testing of biologicals, that the public health council identifies as infectious wastes;
- "blood products" does not include patient care waste such as bandages or disposable gowns that are lightly soiled with blood; and
- any other waste materials the generator designates as infectious wastes.

Note: nearly all categories of infectious waste depend upon the presence or the possibility of the presence of infectious agents. The exceptions to this are blood, blood products, and cultures, which are always considered infectious waste.

Compliance Requirements

Applicable Rules

Ohio Administrative Code Rules:

3745-27-01	3745-27-32	3745-27-35
3745-27-30	3745-27-33	3745-27-36

More Information

For more information regarding this document, please contact the Infectious Waste Unit at 614-644-2621.

Disclaimer

The procedures set out in this document are intended solely for guidance. The procedures in this document are not intended and cannot be relied upon to create rights, substantive or procedural, enforceable by any party against Ohio EPA. While this guidance document is not legally binding, all statutes and rules referenced herein are binding and enforceable.

Ohio EPA reserves the right to vary this guidance or to change it at any time without public notice and also reserves the right to deviate from this guidance on a case-by-case basis.

Small Generators of Infectious Waste

Monthly Generation Log

Small generators are required to maintain a monthly generation log of the amount of infectious waste generated each calendar month. The monthly generation rate log must show the weight of all the infectious waste generated during each calendar month. If the infectious waste is sent to a licensed infectious waste treatment facility, the generator may use the shipping papers that include the weight of all the infectious waste that is generated during that calendar month.

Small generators may also use a combination of a monthly generation rate log and shipping papers to document the monthly generation rate if the generator does not send all infectious wastes generated for treatment. If a small generator produces 50 pounds of infectious waste in any calendar month, they must submit an application for registration as a generator of infectious waste. Please submit your application through Ohio EPA's eBusiness Center at ebiz.epa.ohio.gov. Contact the Division of Materials and Waste Management at 614-644-2621 for assistance with the online registration process.

Segregate and Properly Manage Infectious Wastes

- **Infectious Sharps:** All infectious sharps must be placed in a sharps container.
- **Untreated liquid or semi-liquid infectious waste:** Infectious wastes consisting of blood, blood products, body fluids, and excreta may be disposed of into a sanitary sewer if the disposal is allowed for the wastewater treatment system.
- **Specimen cultures and cultures of viable infectious agents:** These items must be treated on the premises where they are generated or transported to a licensed infectious waste treatment facility. Cultures may be rendered noninfectious by chemical treatment using the approved chemical of 15 % vol/vol household bleach solution. The solution must be made immediately before use and all cultures must be submerged for a minimum of 20 minutes. Expired or unwanted vaccines are required to be handled in the same manner as cultures and stocks of infectious agents.
- **Other infectious wastes:** All other categories of infectious waste must be segregated from the rest of the waste stream for quantification.
- **Sharps containers and all other infectious wastes** can be disposed as solid waste (except for specimen cultures and cultures of infectious agents) after the amount of waste has been weighed and recorded in the monthly infectious waste generation log. Hospitals are allowed to accept infectious waste from small generators that have staff privileges at that hospital. Infectious wastes that are transported off of the site where they are generated are subject to the U.S. Department of Transportation hazardous materials regulations contained in 49 C.F.R. 171 to 49 C.F.R. 180. Note: even though state regulations allow for the disposal of untreated infectious waste into the solid waste stream by small generators, some solid waste haulers and landfill operators do not accept this type of waste.
- **Storage requirements:** The integrity of the container must be maintained. There are no time limits regarding infectious waste storage, however, infectious waste must remain in a non-putrescent state using refrigeration or freezing when necessary. Infectious waste must also be maintained in a manner that prevents it from becoming a food source or breeding ground to animals or insects. Infectious waste storage areas must be marked with a sign that states "warning: infectious waste" and/or displays the international biohazard symbol or lock the storage area. Outside storage areas must be locked to prevent unauthorized access.
- **Infectious waste that is also a hazardous waste:** Any infectious waste or infectious waste mixture that meets the definition of a hazardous waste shall be managed as a hazardous waste. Some vaccines contain thimerosal, a mercury containing preservative, and must be disposed of as a hazardous waste.
- **Infectious waste that is also a radioactive waste:** Any infectious waste that is also radioactive shall be managed in accordance with applicable Ohio Department of Health and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
- **Treated Infectious Waste:** Once infectious waste has been treated to render it non-infectious, it may be disposed as solid waste. A disposal paper must accompany the load of treated infectious waste to the landfill. The disposal paper is a three-part form with one copy retained by the waste generator, one copy retained by the landfill, and one copy returned to the generator by the landfill.