

Landscaping – Infectious Waste Fact Sheet



WHAT IS INFECTIOUS WASTE?

Infectious wastes (also called biomedical waste) include human waste, animal waste and objects and materials contaminated with blood and body fluids containing disease-causing micro-organisms or viruses.

Occasionally, you may encounter discarded hypodermic needles, syringes, condoms, and other objects or materials contaminated with blood or body fluids. You must exercise special precaution in handling such materials and objects. Often these biological wastes are contaminated with germs which can make you ill. Major concerns are the spread of hepatitis B and AIDS. Dead animals can also transmit diseases (like rabies) and should also be treated as infectious waste. If it is not part of your job duties to remove dead animals, contact an animal control agency for removal.

Regulations by local, provincial, and federal agencies usually specify that infectious waste must be segregated, packaged, and disposed of in a specific manner. Check your local regulations for details.

What are some safety tips to know when dealing with infectious waste?

Since parks and some other outdoor areas are places where drugs may be used and where human waste, animal waste and objects and materials contaminated with blood and body fluids may be found, supervisors and employees should anticipate that infectious waste may be encountered.

DO

- Ask your supervisor for training, if he or she has not done so already, so you:
 - understand potential hazards;
 - know your roles and responsibilities;
 - are familiar with regulations.
- Wear puncture-resistant gloves and safety boots.
- Wear respiratory protection if you must clean up waste, leaves or dust which may contain mouse waste. Mice can carry the hantavirus which can become airborne with dust and may be inhaled by workers.
- Make sure your tetanus immunization is up to date (recommended every 10 years).
- Consider all contaminated wastes as infectious.
- Handle all contaminated wastes very carefully to prevent body contact and accidental injury.
- Use pliers or tongs to gently pick up needles or glass. Do not touch the needle directly if possible.
- Dispose of infectious waste in a puncture-resistant container such as a bucket

or box with a secure lid and lined with a leak-proof, puncture-resistant plastic.

- Post a biological hazard symbol on the waste container.
- Report any injuries immediately.



- Call your local public health department or police for further assistance.

What should I avoid doing?

- Do not load an infectious waste container beyond its capacity.
- DO NOT empty or carry the container by putting your fingers on the inside. Wear appropriate gloves and empty waste paper baskets (or other containers) by holding container on the outside.
- Do not hold the top edge (or lip) of waste containers or garbage cans with your fingers on inside surface of the container – your fingers could get cut or punctured from broken glass, syringes or used needles if you dump the contents into another container
- Do not compact infectious waste. This process may disperse the contamination into the air. Also, your puncture-resistant gloves could actually be punctured by a used syringe needle, for example, if you try compacting the contents with your hands.
- Do not mix infectious waste with regular trash.
- Do not reach into any waste container or receptacle which may contain hazardous waste.

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