



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DIVISION

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<http://www.sdcdeh.org>

MEDICAL WASTE DISPOSAL FOR DENTAL PRACTICES

Waste from a dental office that is regulated as medical waste is in almost all cases, limited to *sharps*. Most general dental offices generate *medical solid waste* and some offices may also generate *biohazardous waste*. Other regulated wastes, such as spent or expired chemicals, may be classified as *hazardous waste*, which is not considered medical waste.

What types of wastes generated at a dental practice are regulated as medical waste?

Sharps waste and *biohazardous waste* are the two types of waste from a dental practice that must be managed as medical waste.

What is sharps waste?

Sharps waste includes devices with acute rigid corners, edges, or protuberances capable of cutting or piercing, such as needles, scalpel blades, acupuncture needles, and endodontic files. Cal/OSHA may consider orthodontic wires to be *sharps waste*. The California Department of Health Services and County of San Diego do not regulate orthodontic wires as *sharps waste*.

What waste from dental medicine is biohazardous waste?

Biohazardous waste includes waste which contains recognizable fluid blood, containers or equipment containing blood that is fluid and several other categories of waste, such as pharmaceutical waste, chemotherapeutic waste (trace amounts) and bacterial cultures that are not normally generated in a general dental practice.

What are the pharmaceutical waste handling requirements?

Additional information about pharmaceutical waste can be found at:

http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/hazmat/med_waste/hmd_pharmwaste.html

How should a dental practice dispose of regulated medical waste?

There are several options for disposal of *sharps waste*:

- Disposal through a registered medical waste hauler,
- Treatment onsite by a steam autoclave prior to disposal as medical solid waste,
- Mail-in sharps disposal (sharps only),
- Use of an alternative treatment technology approved by the California Department of Health Services, such as encapsulation (this technology is approved for *sharps waste* only).

Approved alternative technologies are listed on the California Department of Health Services web page:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/Pages/default.aspx>

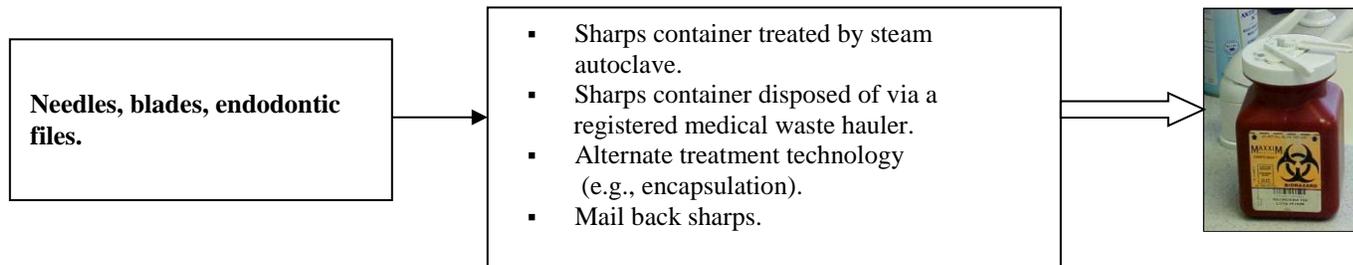
More information on *Medical Solid Waste* and *Hazardous Waste* is available at the Hazardous Materials Division website. Visit <http://www.sdcdeh.org> and look at the Medical Waste Web page under “waste.”

DENTAL WASTE DISPOSAL GUIDE

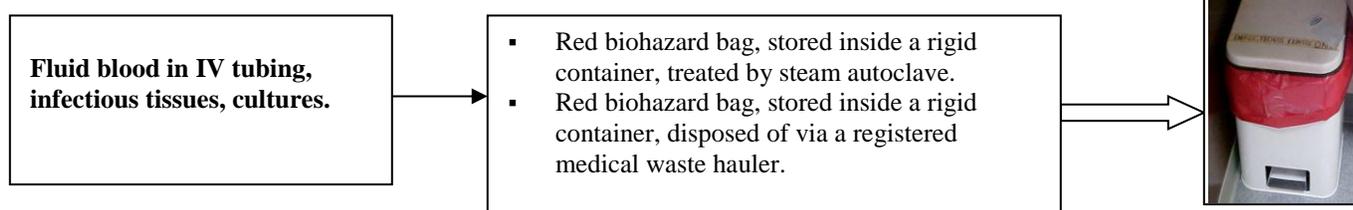
This diagram is intended as a disposal guide for some types of regulated waste.

It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive list of all regulated wastes.

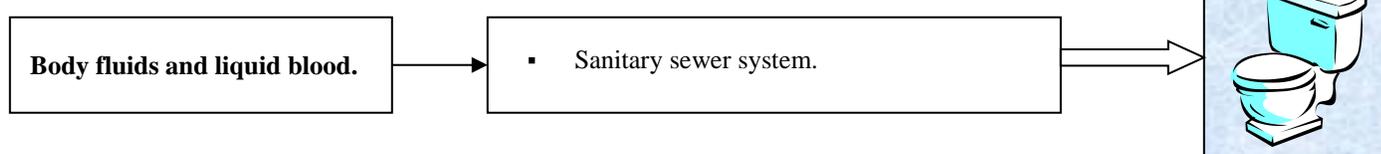
Regulated Medical (Sharps) Waste



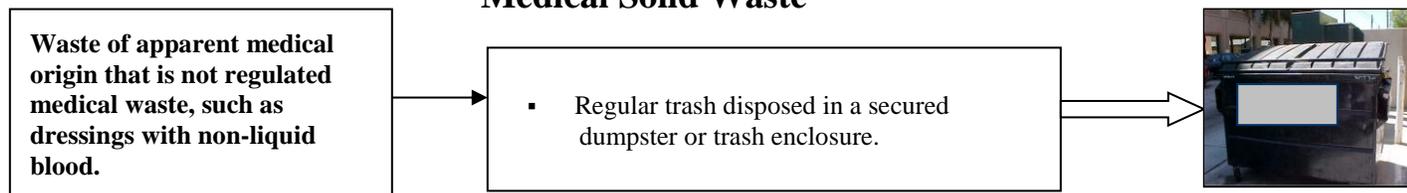
Regulated Medical (Biohazardous) Waste



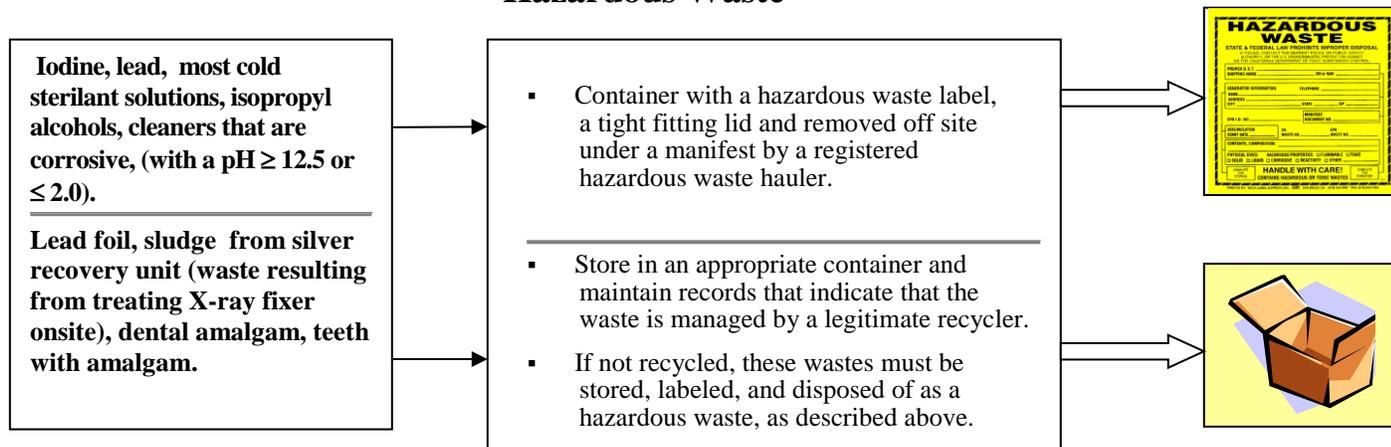
Regulated Medical (Biohazardous) Liquid Waste



Medical Solid Waste



Hazardous Waste



For additional information about medical and hazardous waste contact the Hazardous Materials Duty Desk at (858) 505-6880 or visit HMD's website at <http://www.scdcdh.org>