

# SOP: Healthcare Waste Segregation and Classification

This SOP details the procedures for **healthcare waste segregation and classification**, ensuring the accurate identification, separation, and categorization of medical waste. It covers the types of healthcare waste, appropriate containers and color-coding, handling and storage practices, regulatory compliance, and safety measures to minimize risks to healthcare workers and the environment. The goal is to promote safe disposal, reduce contamination, and improve overall waste management within healthcare facilities.

## 1. Purpose

To establish standard procedures for the segregation and classification of healthcare waste, ensuring safety, regulatory compliance, and environmental responsibility.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all healthcare staff involved in the disposal, handling, storage, and transportation of waste within the facility.

## 3. Definitions

- Healthcare Waste:** All waste generated in healthcare facilities, labs, and research settings related to diagnosis, treatment, or immunization.
- Segregation:** Separation of different categories of waste at the point of generation.
- Color-Coding:** Use of specific containers/liners to identify waste categories.

## 4. Responsibilities

- All Staff:** Follow segregation guidelines and ensure proper disposal.
- Waste Management Team:** Regularly collect, transport, and monitor waste in accordance with the SOP.
- Supervisors:** Provide training and conduct audits for compliance.

## 5. Classification of Healthcare Waste

Type of Waste	Examples	Color Code	Container Type
Infectious Waste	Contaminated dressings, swabs, used PPE, body fluids	Yellow	Leak-proof, puncture-resistant bags
Sharps	Needles, scalpels, blades, syringes	Red	Puncture-proof sharps container
Pathological Waste	Tissues, organs, body parts	Yellow	Leak-proof container
Pharmaceutical Waste	Expired drugs, vaccines	Blue	Labelled containers
Chemical Waste	Solvents, disinfectants, reagents	Brown	Chemical-resistant container
General Waste	Paper, food, packaging	Black/Green	Standard trash bins

## 6. Procedures

- Waste Segregation:**
  - Segregate waste at the point of generation.
  - Place waste in designated, color-coded containers.
  - Do not mix different categories in one container.
- Container Handling:**
  - Ensure containers are correctly labeled and covered.
  - Do not overfill containers (< 3/4 full).
  - Sharp waste must always go in puncture-proof containers.

### 3. **Storage and Transport:**

- Store segregated waste in designated temporary storage areas.
- Transport waste daily to central storage or disposal areas.
- Minimize manual handling to reduce injury risk.

### 4. **Disposal:**

- Dispose waste according to local, state, and national regulations.
- Engage licensed waste contractors for collection and disposal.

## 7. **Safety Measures**

- Wear appropriate PPE when handling waste.
- Report spills or exposures immediately.
- Ensure hand hygiene after handling waste.
- Vaccinate staff (e.g., Hepatitis B) as per policy.

## 8. **Training and Compliance**

- Conduct initial and annual refresher training for all staff.
- Post clear signage at waste generation points.
- Audit practices regularly for adherence.

## 9. **References**

- Local and national healthcare waste management guidelines
- WHO: Safe management of wastes from health-care activities
- OSHA standards on occupational exposure to hazardous chemicals in laboratories