

SOP: Clinical Waste Identification and Segregation Procedures

This SOP details the **clinical waste identification and segregation procedures** to ensure proper handling, minimize contamination risks, and comply with health and safety regulations. It covers the classification of clinical waste types, color-coded container use, safe collection methods, labeling requirements, storage protocols, and disposal guidelines designed to protect healthcare staff, patients, and the environment from exposure to hazardous materials.

1. Purpose

To standardize the identification, segregation, collection, labeling, storage, and disposal of clinical waste in accordance with applicable regulations to safeguard public and occupational health.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all personnel involved in the handling of clinical waste within the healthcare facility, including medical, nursing, laboratory, and housekeeping staff.

3. Responsibilities

- **All Staff:** Follow SOP requirements for waste segregation and report any deviation or incident.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Ensure staff training, provision of appropriate containers, and regular monitoring.
- **Waste Handling Personnel:** Implement proper collection, transport, and disposal procedures.

4. Clinical Waste Classification & Color Coding

Waste Type	Examples	Container Color	Container Type
Infectious Waste	Blood-soaked dressings, culture materials	Yellow	Leak-proof bags/bins
Sharps	Needles, blades, broken glass	Yellow with mark/label	Puncture-proof, rigid sharps container
Pathological Waste	Tissues, body parts	Red	Leak-proof container/bag
Pharmaceutical Waste	Expired medications	Blue	Secure container
Cytotoxic Waste	Cytotoxic drug vials, gloves, gowns	Purple	Impervious container/bag
General Waste	Papers, food waste	Black/Green	General trash bin

5. Procedures

1. **Identification:**
 - Assess the waste at the point of generation and identify its type based on classification.
2. **Segregation:**
 - Immediately segregate waste into the designated color-coded container.
 - Do not mix different waste types in a single container.
3. **Collection:**
 - Waste handlers must use personal protective equipment (PPE) during collection.
 - Sharps must be placed directly into sharps containers without manual handling.
4. **Labeling:**
 - Ensure all waste containers are clearly labeled with the waste type, department, and date of generation.
5. **Storage:**
 - Store segregated waste in designated, secure storage areas with restricted access.
 - Do not exceed the maximum holding time as per regulations (typically **≤48 hours** for infectious waste).

6. Disposal:

- Transport waste using appropriate trolleys or carts to the central storage or treatment area.
- Arrange for collection and disposal by a licensed contractor or internal incineration/autoclaving as per policy.

6. Training and Compliance

- All relevant staff must complete mandatory waste management training on commencement and annually thereafter.
- Regular audits to ensure compliance with segregation and labeling protocols.

7. References

- Local health and safety regulations
- WHO guidelines on safe management of wastes from healthcare activities
- National waste management legislation

Note: Failure to comply with these procedures may result in disciplinary action and legal penalties. Report incidents or exposures immediately to the infection control team.