



The Medical Waste Reporter

Announcements for infectious waste generators
For reporting year 2014

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Waste & Materials Management
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Annual Reporting Now On-line

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is converting its infectious waste annual reports from paper forms to on-line forms this year.

Barb Bickford, DNR Medical Waste Coordinator, hopes that the on-line system makes it easier for facilities to prepare their reports.

Barb notes, "The on-line form will be especially helpful when several people work on the report together."

Anyone who wants to see, fill out or sign an annual report must obtain a unique Wisconsin User ID (also known as a "WAMS ID") and register it with the DNR's on-line reporting portal, "DNR Switchboard." This maintains data security.

The on-line report will be released in February. This is later than usual, so the DNR will extend the due date for the 2014 report accordingly.

The DNR is offering webinars to help new users. To learn more and to view the webinar presentation for accessing the system, visit the DNR infectious waste topic page dnr.wi.gov/topic/healthwaste/infectious.html (see the Annual Report tab).

To access the DNR Switchboard, go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/switchboard/. If you have any questions, please send an email to: DNRMedicalWaste@wisconsin.gov.

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Wisconsin Earns Seventeen PGH Environmental Excellence Awards!

Congratulations to all who earned Practice Greenhealth (PGH) Environmental Excellence awards in 2014!



The award winners are:

Top 25 Environmental Excellence Award (the highest)
Gundersen Health System, LaCrosse

Emerald Partner for Change Award
Hudson Hospital and Clinics, Hudson
Mayo Health System - Eau Claire, Eau Claire
Wm S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, Madison

Greenhealth Partner for Change
Ministry Saint Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield
Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire
St. Joseph's Hospital, Chippewa Falls
St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, Green Bay
St. Nicholas Hospital, Sheboygan
St. Vincent Hospital, Green Bay
ThedaCare - Appleton Medical Center, Appleton
Westfields Hospital, New Richmond

Making Medicine Mercury Free
ThedaCare – Appleton Medical Center, Appleton
Westfields Hospital, New Richmond

Circles of Excellence: Food
Hudson Hospital and Clinics, Hudson

Circles of Excellence: Energy
Gundersen Health System, LaCrosse

Circles of Excellence: Green Building
Gundersen Health System, LaCrosse

Find out firsthand how winning an award can boost internal support for your environmental programs. Applications for the 2015 awards are available at www.practicegreenhealth.org/awards/

DEA Issues Rules for Disposal of Controlled Substances

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) released final rules on the disposal of controlled substances in September 2014. The rules took effect on October 9th.

The new rule expands the options for collecting controlled substances from the public for the purpose of disposal, including take-back events, mail-back programs and collection receptacle locations.



Law enforcement agencies may voluntarily continue to conduct take-back events, administer mail-back programs and maintain collection receptacles.

Others, including authorized hospitals and clinics with an on-site pharmacy and retail pharmacies, may maintain collection receptacles in their own facilities and at long-term care facilities.

To read the final rule and fact sheets for the public, DEA registrants and long term care facilities, go to:
www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/index.html

Wisconsin Passes Drug Disposal Law in 2014

Wisconsin's drug disposal law, 2013 Wisconsin Act 198, allows communities to set up drug disposal programs and family members to possess controlled substances for the purposes of disposal.

The law changed aspects of existing state law that would have conflicted with the DEA rule, which came out a few months later. It also requires those who collect household pharmaceuticals to register with the DNR. The DNR will maintain a list of these locations.

DNR CONTACTS:

To receive technical assistance and e-mail announcements about medical waste, contact:

Barb Bickford, Medical Waste Coordinator
DNR Waste and Materials Management
Phone: (608) 267-3548 Fax: (608) 267-2768
Email: DNRmedicalwaste@wisconsin.gov

For guidance on healthcare waste, medical waste and pharmaceutical waste, go to: dnr.wi.gov and search for "health care waste".

The new law is part of a suite of laws related to heroin abuse. In addition to allowing drug collections, the laws allow first responders to administer Narcan®, a drug that temporarily reverses the effects of an opiate overdose; grant partial immunity to persons who call 911 or bring someone to the emergency room in an overdose situation; and provide grants to counties that offer substance abuse treatment and alternatives to jail.

Wisconsin's drug disposal law will take effect in mid-2015 and can be accessed here:
docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2013/related/acts/198.pdf

Energy Independence is Possible!

Gundersen Health System, headquartered in LaCrosse, achieved its first days of energy independence and became the first health system in the nation to attain the distinction.

Oct. 14, 2014 was the first day that Gundersen produced more energy than the health system consumed.

Read more and find links to Gundersen's "Envision" sustainability resources at:
www.gundersenenvision.org/gundersen-reaches-first-days-of-energy-independence

Sharps Collection Updates

Does your facility collect sharps from the public? And if not, would you consider doing it? Either way, check out these updates about sharps collection:

- The link to the DNR's list of registered sharps collection stations has changed. Find the new link under the "Collection Stations" tab on this webpage:
dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/HouseholdSharps.html

Note: The DNR refers people to the Household Sharps page because it describes other disposal options in addition to those registered stations on the list. For example, healthcare facilities may choose not to be on the public list.

- The DNR has updated two publications: *Sharps Collection: Requirements for Collectors* (WA807) dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/wa/wa807.pdf and *Sharps Collection: Examples & Publicity* (WA806) dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/wa/wa806.pdf
- In mid-2015, the DNR will roll out an on-line registration system for sharps collection stations and pharmaceutical collection locations.

ASK
DNR

Is it Infectious Waste... ...or Not?

It's been over 20 years since OSHA adopted its standard for Bloodborne Pathogens (the BBP standard) and

Wisconsin adopted its medical waste rule (ch. NR526).

A whole generation has passed through nursing school since then, and some younger staff may wonder why certain items are infectious waste and not others.

The DNR relies on the Department of Health Services (DHS) to determine whether particular items are infectious waste or not.

The DHS infection control specialist Gwen Borlaug explains, "From an infection control perspective, items that are so saturated with blood and body fluids that the fluids cannot be contained are infectious waste. These include items that have drippable, pourable, squeezable or flakeable amounts of blood. On the other hand, blood and body fluids in items like diapers and sanitary napkins can be contained so these items are not infectious waste."

Borlaug adds, "Discarded sharps are always infectious waste, even if they are sterile, for two reasons – they are indistinguishable from used sharps, and they must be rendered un-usable before being landfilled."

The good news, Borlaug stresses, is that there is no evidence of anyone getting infected with bloodborne pathogens from properly managed medical waste.

Why Reduce Medical Waste?

Medical waste reduction and recycling together save money and create jobs. They also lower the impacts on the environment from the production of new items and reduce the health effects of disposal.

Here is how Wisconsin's requirement to reduce medical waste has evolved:

1970s-1980s: Increasing concern about patient safety led to wider use of disposable single use items, particularly after HIV was discovered in the United States and OSHA adopted its bloodborne pathogen standard.

1990: Wisconsin newly-adopted recycling law allowed any recyclables mixed with medical waste to be burned. Unfortunately, this provision was a disincentive to recycling, and recyclables continued to be burned in hundreds of medical waste incinerators, most of which had little to no air pollution controls.

1992: The legislature closed the incineration loophole by requiring hospitals, clinics and nursing homes to implement waste reduction plans, to separate waste at the source and to evaluate alternatives to disposables.

1994: In NR526, the DNR adopted its technical advisors' recommendations about what is and is not infectious waste and fleshed out requirements for reducing medical waste.

2000: Impending federal incinerator standards led all but a handful of medical waste incinerators to shut down during the 1990s. (The very last one closed in 2010.)

2012: A DNR study reveals that despite a strong household recycling ethic and new recycling markets, Wisconsin landfills over \$64 worth of recyclable plastic every year.

With recycling markets opening up and incinerators closed down, we have all the more reason to recycle medical materials, particularly plastics and plastic wrap. See the Recycling resources on page 4.

Ask your waste vendor to help you find markets for your valuable recyclable materials

Reduction Tip: How to Evaluate Alternatives to Disposables

Wisconsin's medical waste rule, chapter NR 526, requires hospitals, clinics and nursing homes to evaluate alternatives to the use of disposables.

Here are lists of products to evaluate, alternatives to evaluate, re-use options and factors to consider:

Products to evaluate

- Gowns for clinic exams
- Disposable lab coats
- Underpads/Chux® pads
- Operating room packs, gowns and drapes
- Diapers and briefs
- Bedpans and urinals
- Basins and water pitchers
- Ambu bags and resuscitation bags
- Reprocessable ventilator tubing
- Instruments for procedures (e.g., suture removal)
- Utility gloves
- Waste containers

Alternatives to evaluate

- Reduce the amount of packaging
- Reduce the use of disposable items

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- Substitute other products and materials
- Change or modify equipment
- Change purchasing policies or procedures
- Change housekeeping practices
- Provide effective ways to separate infectious waste from other wastes
- Reuse by appropriate reprocessing
- Sterilize, disinfect or decontaminate
- Launder
- Recharge
- Exchange waste or equipment with others
- Sell or donate reprocessed items or equipment

Factors to consider

- Costs, including benefits, savings and liabilities
- Probable adverse effects on patient care and worker safety
- Probable effects of transferring waste disposal to other media (land, air, water)
- State recycling laws and rules
- Local recycling ordinances and recycling options
- Compliance with other rules and regulations
- Considerations specific to your facility

NEW RESOURCES

To learn about the latest resources throughout the year, join the DNR's medical waste e-mail announcement list (see contact box on page 2).

Hazardous Chemicals

NIOSH List of Hazardous Drugs and Alert on Antineoplastic and Other Hazardous Drugs, updates:
www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hazdrug/

Sustainable/Green Purchasing

This article lists **tools for buying greener products**:
www.triplepundit.com/2014/07/sustainable-purchasing-101-tools-buying-greener-products/

Safer Products and Practices for Disinfecting and Sanitizing Surfaces

www.sfenvironment.org/sites/default/files/fliers/files/sfe_th_safer_products_and_practices_for_disinfecting.pdf

Healthcare Design offers an extensive **on-line buyers guide** directory.hcdmagazine.com/

Recycling & Waste Reduction

The DNR Waste Reduction and Recycling: A Guide for Wisconsin Healthcare (publication WA1150)
dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/wa/wa1150.pdf

MnTAP study on blue wrap and reusable containers
www.greenbiz.com/blog/2013/03/28/cutting-hospital-waste-emissions-blue-wrap

Greening the OR targets cost savings and waste reduction www.greeningtheor.org

Plastic Film Recycling can help your facility recycle bags and wrap. plasticfilmrecycling.org

Green Infrastructure

Water and Wellness: Green Infrastructure for Health Co-Benefits clearly explains the many benefits of green infrastructure.

stormwater.wef.org/2014/04/water-wellness/

EPA's Green Infrastructure program offers free live and recorded webinars on operations and maintenance
water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/gi_training.cfm

UW pubs on Asphalt, Pavements and De-icing
tic.engr.wisc.edu/Publications.lasso

Lighting Energy Efficiency in Parking Campaign
Save money with high efficient lighting solutions in your parking facilities at www.leepcampaign.org/

Donations

The DNR has updated its **Donating Medical Items** webpage to include new resources.
dnr.wi.gov/topic/healthwaste/donate.html

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