**School District Name**

**Biomedical Waste Plan**

This appendix addresses minimum safety practices relating to biomedical waste management, including segregation, handling, labeling, storage, and transport. This applies to all facilities in the district that generate, transport, or store, biomedical waste to ensure that the waste is properly handled to protect public health.

**Description of Waste:**

**Biomedical waste**, also known as **biohazardous or infectious waste, refers to any waste containing** infectious materials or potentially infectious substances such as blood. It is generated primarily by healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics, laboratories, and medical research facilities. A school health office is considered a generator of biomedical waste, though typically on a much smaller scale than hospitals or clinics; however, they must adhere to the same rules and parameters.

**Types of Biomedical Waste:**

• Sharps: Needles or lancets from administering medications or conducting blood sugar tests

• Infectious Waste: Bandages, gauze, or tissues soaked (saturated) with blood or other bodily fluids.

• Pharmaceutical Waste: Unused or expired unclaimed medications

**Sharps Procedures:**

The safe use of needles and lancets in a school health office is essential to prevent accidental injuries and the transmission of infectious diseases. Here are the key steps to ensure safety:

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Wear gloves whenever handling needles or lancets to provide a barrier against potential exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

2. Proper Use

Use a new, sterile needle or lancet for each procedure.

Do not recap needles after use, as this increases the risk of needle-stick injuries.

3. Discarding: Dispose of needles and lancets immediately after use in an appropriate sharps container. Sharps shall be discarded at the point of origin in single-use or reusable sharps containers.

4. Disposal: A sharps container is considered full when materials placed into it reach the designated fill line, or if a fill line is not indicated, when additional materials cannot be placed into the container without cramming, or when no additional materials are to be placed in the container.

Containers shall be collected when full and disposed of at a biomedical waste treatment facility or another medical facility that has volunteered to serve as a collection point.

It is prohibited to throw sharps containers away in the regular trash.

5. Transporting: The designated employee may transport sharps package to a licensed biomedical waste treatment facility or another medical facility that has volunteered to serve as a collection point for sharps if no more than 50 pounds of sharps are transported in one trip.

If these parameters are met, there is an exemption that allows the safe transportation of Biomedical waste without the need for a transportation permit.

If the district chooses to use a remote disposal company that allows waste to be sent through the US postal service, it must comply with all USPS rules and limits. USPS guidelines limit the amount of sharps to 35 lbs.

**Infectious Waste Procedures:**

Proper handling of infectious waste is crucial to prevent the spread of infections and protect the health and safety of healthcare workers, patients, and the environment.

1. Identify and handle: Identify Infectious Waste: Clearly define what constitutes infectious waste (e.g., blood-soaked bandages, used gloves, contaminated materials).

If the material has minimal blood (e.g., a small spot) and is not saturated to the point of being a biohazard. If the Band-Aid is dry and shows no signs of contamination with other possible infectious materials (OPIM).

It is always good practice to err on the side of caution. In any situation where there is ambiguity, regardless of the quantity of blood or bodily fluids, treating the material as biomedical waste ensures safety and compliance with regulatory standards.

2. Spill Kits: Ensure spill kits containing absorbent materials, disinfectants, and PPE are readily available.

3. Post incidents clean up: Quickly contain and clean any spills of infectious waste using appropriate PPE and following established procedures. Thoroughly disinfect the area where the spill occurred to prevent contamination.

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Wear Appropriate PPE: Always use gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection when handling infectious waste when deemed necessary.

Change PPE: Change gloves and other PPE between tasks or if they become contaminated.

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Use Properly Labeled Containers: Ensure that all containers used for transporting infectious waste are clearly labeled with the biohazard symbol.

For off-site disposal, use a licensed medical waste transporter that complies with local regulations.

**Pharmaceutical Waste Handling:**

Pharmaceutical medical waste is any unused, expired, or contaminated medication or drug that is unclaimed and left at the school.

Pharmaceutical waste shall be kept in the Nurses office and kept under lock and key. Must mark the medication as medical waste, do not use.

Must be disposed of disposed of through a licensed pharmaceutical waste disposal service.

**Waste Storage bags:**

Different colored bags are used to classify and handle various types of medical waste, ensuring proper segregation and compliance with safety regulations. Here's a breakdown of the common colors and their associated types of waste:

1. Red Medical Waste Bags:

Designated for biohazardous waste or infectious waste.

Includes items contaminated with blood, body fluids, and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM).

Examples: used gloves, blood-soaked bandages, gauze, contaminated sharp containers, and laboratory waste that has been in contact with infectious agents.

2. Orange Medical Waste Bags:

Typically used for clinical and pharmaceutical waste that is not infectious but still requires special handling and disposal.

Examples: expired or unused drugs, medicines, and other pharmaceuticals that need to be safely disposed of to prevent misuse and environmental contamination.

**Training Schedule:**

Training on this plan will be conducted congruent with and or part of the bloodborne pathogens training**.**

1. Initial training for new employees upon hire.

2. Annual refresher training for all staff.

Training Topics:

• Identification and segregation of biomedical waste.

• Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

• Safe handling and storage of biomedical waste.

**Licensing:**

Schools that have staff who generate sharps via administration of medications, vaccines, etc. (or similarly generate sharps or other biomedical waste), then each location is required to be registered as a biomedical waste generator. Each physical location must have its own registration number. The smallest quantity generator category is for locations generating less than 10 lbs./month. Initial registration is $50 regardless of size, but the annual fees (billed in January) are $25 for small, $50 for medium, and $500 for large (over 50 lbs./month) quantity generators.

The biomedical waste generator registration form can be found here: [https://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/biomedical/documents/2018-bio-waste-form.pdf.](https://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/biomedical/documents/2018-bio-waste-form.pdf)

If the district has a mobile vaccination service such as those proving flu, COVID, or other vaccines, and do not generate any other sharps, the district will not need to have a registration number as the mobile services should have