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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

Medical Waste Information Bulletin and Disposal Guide

Recent changes in state law (*sharps*) and the disclosure that medical waste constituents (*pharmaceuticals*) have been found in drinking water have focused public attention on *medical waste management*. Medical waste can be divided into two basic groups, *sharps* and *biohazards* (which include pharmaceuticals). Both types can be of concern to public health workers, their clientele, and the public because of special problems they pose for management (handling and storage) and disposal.

Sharps – As the name implies these wastes consist of medical devices meant to pierce or cut tissue. Items such as hypodermic needles, catheters, scalpels and dental tools are common sharp wastes. Since **September 1, 2008** sharp waste, *including household generated waste*, must be placed in approved sharps containers and either picked up by a licensed medical waste hauler or shipped to a state permitted medical waste disposal facility. Sharps were banned from municipal solid waste streams because of the risk they posed to solid waste collector workers and the public.

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/HHW/Sharps/Brochure.pdf><http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/HHW/Sharps/BrochureSpan.pdf>

There are some state approved sharps processing devices that render sharps safe for disposal as solid waste. These devices are tested, approved, and placed on a list by the State Health Department.

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/pages/alternativetech.aspx>

Biohazards – This group is more diverse than sharps and can consist of waste contaminated with body fluids, old medicines, disinfectants, and microbiological cultures. The most common type of biohazard waste is material contaminated by blood or body fluids and must go into special *medical waste bags* and managed for disposal by licensed medical waste handlers/haulers. Management of disinfectants, cold sterilants and medicine (pharmaceutical) waste, however, can be confusing. Often these wastes are considered *hazardous waste* under state law and must be managed as such. However depending on your status (generator classification) and type of hazardous waste (RCRA or non-RCRA), you may or may not have to manage them as hazardous waste. If managed properly they may qualify as medical waste or even solid waste. Mis-management of these wastes can result in unintended ingestion by people and contamination of drinking water sources.

Attached to this bulletin is a guide (**appendix A**), prepared by Butte County Environmental Health for assisting both businesses and the public for managing and disposing of sharps and pharmaceutical waste.

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The key to utilizing the guide is to determine *generator* status. When considering management of these wastes, two laws overlap; the Medical Waste Management Act (MWMA) which regulates most medical waste and the California Hazardous Waste Control Law along with its regulatory partner Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) which regulates hazardous waste. Both laws designate a generator status:

Medical Waste Management Act

Small Quantity Generator (SQG), less than 200 lbs per month (*med-waste*); Large Quantity Generator (LQG), greater or equal to 200lbs per month.

Hazardous Waste Control Law

Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator (CESQG), less than 100 Kg per month (*haz-waste*); Small Quantity Generator (SQG), greater than or equal to 100 Kg but less than 1000Kg per month; Large Quantity Generator (LQG), greater than or equal to 1000 Kg per month.

Examples of generators (mixed medical and hazardous waste) CESQG – a doctor or dental office
SQG -a clinic or walk-in primary care facility LQG -a hospital or large health care facility

Household generators are of course individuals such homeowners and renters, and are generally excluded from both state laws and regulation. Remember however, that household generators must properly dispose of sharps.

A shortage of facilities that can legally receive these wastes is a problem state-wide and Butte County is no exception. Butte County is applying for funding to increase the number of sharps waste collection sites in the county and the state is sponsoring workshops to determine the most efficient and cost effective model for dealing with pharmaceutical wastes. So in the future, the disposal problems may ease a little for generators in our community. A second attachment is a listing of local Medical Waste Service Providers (see **appendix B**)

If you want more information concerning these wastes please utilize the following web-sites maintained by Cal EPA.

http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/AssessingRisk/PPCP/Pharmaceutical_Regulatory.cfm#How_are_unwanted_pharmaceuticals_regulated?#How_are_unwanted_pharmaceuticals_regulated?

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/hhw/sharps/>

MEDICAL WASTE DISPOSAL GUIDE (Appendix A)

PHARMACEUTICAL (PHARM) WASTE		
GENERATORS	REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS	DISPOSAL

HOUSEHOLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous Waste Pharmaceutical & Medical Waste Pharmaceuticals generated by households are not regulated under the Hazardous Waste or Medical Waste laws except for sharps disposal (see SHARPS Household below). 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required: No disposal requirements but best management practices are encouraged.* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preferred: Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility
CESQG (Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator) -Hazardous waste < 100kg/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharm-waste that meet Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) criteria and those that meet California-only Hazardous Waste criteria (Title 22), will be regulated under the California Medical Waste Management Act (MWMA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HHW or Medical Waste disposal facility
SQG (Small Quantity Generator) -Hazardous waste ≥100 kg but <1000 kg/month Medical waste < 200 lbs/month LQG (Large Quantity Generator) -Hazardous waste ≥1000 kg/month Medical waste ≥200 lbs/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous Waste Pharmaceutical & Medical Waste Pharmaceuticals regulated under RCRA law and California Hazardous Waste Code (Title 22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals must go to a State permitted Hazardous Waste Facility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non – RCRA (California only) Pharmaceutical Waste regulated by California MWMA as a Biohazard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Waste Pharmaceutical (non-RCRA) must go to a State permitted Medical Waste facility
SHARPS		
HOUSEHOLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulated as Medical Waste under California MWMA. Law amended in 2008 to prohibit disposal of household generated sharps into municipal solid waste stream. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HHW Facility; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home-generated sharps consolidation point; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical Waste generator's facility; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical Waste mail-back facility
SQG & LQG SQG < 200 lbs/month LQG ≥200 lbs/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulated as Medical Waste under California MWMA. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Via registered medical waste hauler; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> At offsite Medical Waste treatment facility; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alternative treatment technology (e.g. encapsulation); <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical Waste mail-back facility

*Best management includes *not* disposing of pharm-waste down the drain, and various strategies to prevent tampering of pharm-waste after it has been thrown away by rendering it unusable prior to disposal.



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MEDICAL WASTE SERVICE PROVIDERS (Appendix B)

BUTTE REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

1101 Marauder St Chico, CA
95973

(866) 429-2288. Emergency number (530) 343-5488 Operating hours: Fridays (9am to 1 pm) and Saturdays (9am to 4pm). They accept medical sharps waste, but not infectious medical waste. Disposal is free to Butte County residents who show proof of residency (garbage or utility bill). Sharps shall be in rigid container labeled "Sharps", with the lid taped on.

MEDISPOSE MEDICAL WASTE TRANSPORT

139 Innsbrook Way Chico, CA
95927

(530) 893-0510 Operating hours: Monday through Friday (8am to 5 pm). They accept all types of medical waste (sharps, infectious), but they do not do one-time pickups of household medical wastes nor do they accept customer dropoffs onsite. To receive service, users must sign a contract with Medispose for regular pick-up service. This company also owns "Medwaste Disposal Service, Inc" in Lakeport and Yuba City, both of which adhere to the same rules as the Chico facility.

STERICYCLE

(866) 783-7422 (Former NORTH STATE SPECIALITY WASTE located at 1350 Schwab St in Red Bluff, CA 96080) Medical offices/ facilities only (no service to the public) can call or go on-line www.Stericycle.com for service. Service agreement shall be signed. Local pick-up service will be provided. They accept medical waste, sharps and pharmaceutical waste.

BUTTE COUNTY FIRE STATION NO. 64, KELLY RIDGE

22 Walnut Ave, Oroville

(530) 538-7228 Operating hours: Saturday 9 am -1 pm Accepts sharps in rigid containers labeled "Sharps" with the lid taped on.

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MEDICAL WASTE SERVICE PROVIDERS



MEDICAL WASTE SE
Page 2 of 2

NORTHERN RECYCLING & WASTE SERVICES

920 American Way Paradise, CA
95969

(530) 876-3340 Operating hours: Monday through Friday (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) Coordinator of the program-Jennifer Arbuckle They accept sharps from the public. Sharps shall be in a special container. Containers are available for sale on site (approx. \$5, which is a price for removal). Containers with sharps shall be dropped off in a designated container at the facility.

NORCAL WASTE SYSTEMS

Household Hazardous Waste Facility 2720 South 5th Avenue Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 533-4783 Operating Hours: First and Third Friday on each month (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.) They accept sharps from the public. Sharps shall be in an approved container. Containers with sharps shall be dropped off in a designated container at the facility. Questions, please call operator before delivering sharps.