

PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE

In 1976, Congress passed the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. This act mandates the proper storage and disposal of hazardous wastes, including hazardous pharmaceutical wastes. Enforcement of this law is done by USEPA on the federal level, and NC Dept. of Environment and Natural resources on the state level.

Pharmaceutical waste is any medicine, drug, or pharmaceutical product that is either expired, off-spec, spent, or simply not needed anymore. Spill cleanups of these materials are also considered to be pharmaceutical waste. Most pharmaceutical wastes are non-regulated by EPA but there are some that must be handled as hazardous wastes because they are regulated under RCRA guidelines.

Pharmaceutical waste can fall into the following categories:

1. Biowaste and non-regulated pharmaceuticals are items such as blood contaminated items, tissues, sharps, and pharmaceuticals that are not regulated by EPA, such as rituximab and cisplatin.
2. Regulated wastes are materials that are regulated by EPA and must be handled as hazardous chemical wastes. Examples are:
 - IV Tubing from Regulated Drugs
 - Arsenic Trioxide
 - Cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan)
 - Chlorambucil
 - Daunomycin (Daunorubicin)
 - Ethanol (Ethyl Alcohol)
 - Lindane Shampoo
 - Melphalan
 - Mitomycin C
 - Nicotine, not used
 - Reserpine
 - Selenium containing products
 - Silver Absorbent dressings
 - Silver nitrate solution
 - Silver nitrate sticks
 - Silver Sulfadiazene cream (Sulfadine)
 - Silver sustained action gel
 - Warfarin
3. Controlled Substances are regulated by DEA. Pharmacist or Nurses that administer controlled substances to patients and have any material left over are required to destroy any remaining material by washing it down the sink.
4. Regular trash contains items such as outer packaging from medicines or drugs or empty containers that once held non-regulated materials, such as empty bottles of pills or antibiotics. Costwise, regulated wastes are much more expensive to dispose of, so regulated wastes should be stored by themselves and not mixed with other types of waste.

WASTE DISPOSAL GUIDES

[NCBH Internal Pharmacy Waste Disposal Guide](#)

[NCBH External Pharmacy Waste Disposal Guide](#)

[NCBH Nursing Waste Disposal Guide](#)

[WFUSM Hematology/Oncology Nursing Waste Disposal Guide](#)

Reference

[Managing Pharmaceutical Waste: A 10-Step Blueprint for Health Care Facilities In the United States](#)