



## **ADVISORY NO. GMBW – 2**

**[Please file in your ACO Practitioner’s Manual in the “Advisories” Section. Replaces Advisory No. CMGW-1]**

**Date: January 1, 2008**

**Subject: GUIDE FOR MANAGEMENT OF BIOMEDICAL  
WASTE GENERATED IN OPTOMETRISTS’ OFFICES**

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Incineration is the preferred method of disposal for all biomedical and pharmaceutical wastes. Dispose of biomedical waste on a regular basis. Do not stockpile.

### **INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES**

Optometrists and all staff who handle biomedical waste should know and follow appropriate infection control procedures. Ensure that your practice has policies and procedures for proper storage, handling and disposal of biomedical waste and for post-exposure management.

### **SEGREGATION**

Keep the waste in a secure area, and allow access only to authorized personnel while awaiting transport to a disposal site.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

While en route to the disposal site, the transporter is responsible for waste security. All articles that must be decontaminated by heat sterilization (i.e., dressing trays) should be bagged and tagged when transported to a different location for sterilization.

### **ISOLATION WASTE (‘RISK GROUP 4’ +)**

Contact your regional health authority (RHA) public health service about disposing of waste that may be contaminated with high-risk agents (*Arenaviridae*, *Bunyaviridae*, *Filoviridae*, *Flaviviridae*, *Herpesviridae*, *Poxviridae*).

TYPE OF WASTE	DEFINED AS	PACKAGING & SAFETY	TREATMENT OR DISPOSAL REQUIRED
Sharps & surgical instruments	Needles, syringes, blades, lancets or laboratory glass capable of causing punctures or cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not recap waste needles</li> <li>• Use puncture resistant, labeled containers (spill-proof, lockable lid) of materials that may be incinerated</li> <li>• Place sharps containers as close as possible to where sharps are used</li> <li>• Ensure workers use the sharps containers provided</li> <li>• Use only sharps containers that have a clearly defined fill line and are sturdy enough to resist puncture under normal conditions of use and handling</li> </ul>	<p>INCINERATION*</p> <p>Note: Sharps in home settings</p> <p>-When local bylaw allows, sharps from home settings may be sent to approved sanitary landfills in puncture-resistant containers marked Not for Recycling.</p> <p>- When local bylaw prohibits disposal in household waste, take sharps in a puncture-resistant container to a hazardous waste station (Eco Station) or check with local pharmacies or Environmental Public Health Services</p>
Microbiological	Laboratory diagnostic specimens, cultures, live or attenuated vaccines and laboratory material that comes into contact with any of these items	Place in impervious waste bags (strong plastic or double-bagged)	<p>INCINERATION*</p> <p>or</p> <p>Decontamination (by autoclave or method approved by RHA public health service) and disposal to an approved sanitary landfill</p>
Pathological and Anatomical	Human tissues, organs, body parts, products of conception (Note: Hair, nails and teeth are not considered biomedical waste)	Place in sealed impervious containers	<p>INCINERATION*</p> <p>or</p> <p>For religious/cultural reasons, may be buried</p>
Soft Waste	Dressings, sponges, gloves, drapes, equipment or other soft material saturated with blood or purulent discharge	Place in impervious waste bags (strong plastic or double-bagged)	<p>INCINERATION*</p> <p>or</p> <p>Disposal to an approved sanitary landfill</p>

Blood and Body Fluids	Human blood and blood products, body fluids contaminated with blood and fluids removed for diagnosis during surgery or treatment (Note: Excludes urine, feces, tears or saliva unless contaminated with visible blood)	Place in sealed impervious containers	INCINERATION* or Check if your municipality permits disposal into sanitary sewer
Drugs and Pharmaceuticals		Set outdated samples aside in a box or bag	INCINERATION* or Some pharmacies will dispose of drugs and pharmaceuticals

### Disposal of Waste in Your Area

- Contact your municipality directly. Local waste bylaws differ from one community to the next in terms of what is permitted.
- Landfills and incineration facilities are designed for different levels of operation. Facilities that accept biomedical waste must meet specific environmental requirements. Check with your municipality – a municipality can refuse waste if deemed to have an adverse effect upon safe facility operations.

### Occupational Health

- The Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code applies to the health care sector generally and holds employers responsible for ensuring workplace safety.
- The code applies in general to any hazard affecting worker health or safety.
- To view the code and it's companion examination guide, go to the Alberta Human Resources and Employment Website at [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/law/ohs.asp](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/law/ohs.asp)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Biomedical waste guidelines and recommended practices contact:**

<b>Regional Health Authorities</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Aspen Regional Health	Medical Officer of Health	(780)967-6844 (#264)
Calgary Health Region	Office of the Medical Officer of Health	(403)943-1280
Capital Health	Environmental Public Health Service Communicable Disease Control Needlestick Response Team	(780)413-7927 (780)413-7948 (780)480-6598
Chinook Health Region	Medical Officer of Health	(403)388-6014
David Thompson Health Region	Environmental Public Health	(403)3412-2155
East Central Health	Public Health Inspection	(780)842-4077
Northern Lights Health Region	Environmental Health Services	(780)791-6078
Palliser Health Region	Environmental Health Services Medical Officer of Health	(403)502-8205 (403)502-8208
Peace Country Health	Environmental Health Program Medical Officer of Health	(780)513-7516 (780)513-7531