



Physics Division ESH Bulletin 94-4

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From: C. E. Frye, K-1037, MS 7357 (4-9999) *CE Frye*
Subject: Medical Waste Sharps

Industrial wastes generated on the Oak Ridge Reservation are (1) delivered to Industrial Landfill V for direct disposal, or (2) delivered to the 9720-25 baling facility for compaction and baling. The baling and compaction operation at 9720-25 involves activities that have higher probability of personnel exposure to the wastes than direct disposal in the landfill. All appropriate safety measures for personnel protection are followed at 9720-25, but higher probability for personnel exposure to the waste exists. Hence, for safety and operational considerations, certain wastes are not acceptable for processing at the 9720-25 compaction/baling facility.

Recently, questions have arisen about the disposal of medical waste sharps. The following requirements must be followed for disposal of medical waste sharps.

Medical waste sharps, used and unused, that have been treated, but not destroyed, MUST be placed in puncture proof containers, labeled and sent directly to the landfill for disposal with appropriate labels and UCN 2109 forms. Sharps, used and unused, that have been treated and destroyed (as defined in 40 CFR 259.10 [1991]) shall be placed in sealed containers, labeled and shipped directly to the landfill with UCN 2109 forms. Treated and destroyed sharps may be disposed of with other compactible, industrial wastes if the Site Medical Director provides an annual letter acceptable to the landfill operators that presents the medical, safety, and regulatory justification that the treated and destroyed sharps are safe and do not pose a hazard to the personnel at the 9720-25 compactor/baler facility.

This requirement is effective immediately.

Please contact Mickey Willoughby at 6-1866 or Ken Delius at 6-4965 if any questions arise.

We have just received the attached new policy guidance from C. E. Frye regarding disposal of sharps. Luci Bell provides the following guidance. Although Frye's guidance is entitled medical waste sharps, it would also apply to the disposal of ANY sharps generated on our site, including X-Acto blades. The terminology "treat and destroy" used in this letter refers to putting the sharps through one of the new machines that shreds, grinds, and simultaneously disinfects medical wastes, including sharps. The wastes come out of the shredder-grinders essentially "destroyed" and no longer recognizable as the original forms. Needles are ground to a nub, infectious agents are destroyed, etc., and the wastes thus treated no longer present a danger to the baler operators. ORNL Health Services currently does not use this technology. Therefore, ORNL generators will need to continue to collect ALL sharps (infectious or otherwise, including X-Acto knives, needles, broken glass pipettes and syringes, glass slides, etc.) in puncture-proof containers and, contact Luci Bell at 6-5747 for an appointment to place the sharps containers in the special medical waste dumpster. Sharps that the generator can certify have never contacted infectious agents need not be autoclaved, but must be packaged in puncture-proof containers, properly labeled, and discarded in the same special medical waste dumpster.

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