



Waste management

Introduction

This policy provides the guidelines for waste management. Correct and efficient waste management can enhance the organisation's reputation, benefit the community and the environment and minimise exposure to infection and disease. Wherever possible, waste should be reduced and a culture of proactive recycling, reusing and composting encouraged. Reducing waste and actively recycling also reduces the cost of waste disposal.

Waste produced is generally one of the following categories:

- General waste including:
 - General household waste
 - Food waste
 - Sanitary waste, incontinence pads and disposable nappies
- Clinical waste including:
 - Used bandages and dressings
 - Blood-stained body fluids, materials or equipment
- Sharps waste including:
 - Needles and syringes with needles
 - Finger prickers, lancets or blades
 - Auto-injectors such as EpiPens
- Pharmaceutical waste including:
 - Expired pharmaceutical products
 - Pharmaceutical products no longer required
- Green organics including:
 - Grass clippings
 - Grounds maintenance
 - Flowers
 - Raw fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee beans
- Recyclables including:
 - Paper and cardboard
 - Glass jars and bottles
 - Aluminium and steel cans
 - Aerosol cans
 - Hard plastic (PET) bottles and containers
 - Plastic bags
 - Printer toner cartridges
- Sensitive waste including:
 - Printed material with personal or confidential information
 - Computers, storage devices and mobile phones used to store or handle personal information
 - Computer media (hard disks, CDs and USB memory keys) used to store personal information
- E-waste including:
 - Computers and computer parts
 - Photocopiers and printers
 - Mobile phones
 - Medical equipment
 - Household appliances such as TVs, radios, microwave ovens, irons and coffee machines.



PPE

For more information on PPE, refer to the WHS policy.

Out of scope

This policy does not cover anatomical, cytotoxic or radioactive waste.

Applicability

When

- Applies to all sites.

Who

- Applies to all workers including key management personnel, full time workers, part time workers, casual workers, contractors and volunteers.

Documents relevant to this policy

- NDIS (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2018 (Cth)

General waste

General waste is any waste not recyclable or categorised in other waste categories. General waste is insecure and not appropriate for sensitive information as this could increase risks of a data breach (refer to the Information security policy). General waste is not suitable for clinical waste or sharps due to the risk of injury or infection from these.

To reduce general waste, green organics, recyclables and E-waste should not be disposed of in general waste.

To comply with this policy:

- General waste should be reduced wherever possible
- Recyclables should not be placed in general waste but recycled wherever possible
- Clinical waste and sharps must not be disposed of in general waste at any time
- Pharmaceutical waste must not be disposed of in general waste at any time
- Where possible, green organic waste (including garden waste and kitchen scraps) should be composted or disposed of in organic waste rather than general waste.

Clinical waste

Clinical waste is any blood-stained fluids or material such as bandages or dressings. Clinical waste carries a risk of infection so must not be disposed in general waste. Clinical waste must be placed in separate bins designated for clinical waste and stored in a secure location for collection by a qualified waste management service that handles clinical waste.

To comply with this policy:

- Do not dispose of clinical waste in general waste
- Do not dispose of sharps in clinical waste



- When emptying clinical waste bags, PPE must be worn including gloves, apron and protective eyewear
- Do not fill clinical waste bags more than two-thirds of their capacity and secure the contents before closing the bag
- Do not secure clinical waste bags with staples or anything sharp
- Store clinical waste in a secure area with restricted access until collection by a clinical waste management service.

Sharps

Incorrect disposal of sharps i.e. in a plastic bag for general waste, could expose workers and participants at risk of injury and infection. To reduce risks, place all sharps immediately after use in a sharps-approved container (usually yellow) for disposal by a qualified waste management service that handles sharps.

To comply with this policy:

- Always dispose of sharps in a sharps-approved container
- Do not place sharps in any non-sharps approved waste such as general waste or clinical waste
- Always dispose of sharps immediately after use
- Do not attempt to recap needles
- Do not attempt to retrieve anything from a sharps container
- Do not fill a sharps container more than three quarters full or beyond the “fill” line
- Lock sharps-approved containers in the medication cupboard when not in use.

Pharmaceutical waste

Pharmaceutical waste includes pharmaceutical products expired or no longer required. If placed in general waste, these items are potentially dangerous and harmful to the environment.

All pharmaceutical waste:

- Must be returned to a pharmacy for safe disposal
- Must not be placed in general waste.

Green organics

To reduce general waste, green organics should be composted or placed in garden waste bins for collection by local government curb side collection, if available. Sites with gardens/yards should compost kitchen scraps to reduce general waste and to enrich the environment. Composting is best done using a compost bin on the ground to attract worms and is mixed with dead leaves, shredded paper and/or mulch to help the compost process. Once broken down, matured compost can be used to benefit the garden.

To comply with this policy:

- If possible and feasible, kitchen scraps (raw fruit and vegetable scraps, raw egg shells, used coffee beans) should be composted with organic garden waste rather than disposed of in general waste
- Green organic garden waste and lawn clippings should be placed in organic waste collections operated by local governments (if available), collected by a waste management service or composted onsite.

Recyclables

Wherever possible, recyclables should always be recycled to reduce general waste. Everything that can be recycled should be recycled or reused, this includes:



- Curb side collection (local government, where available) or a waste management recycling service for recycling:
 - Paper and cardboard (including newspapers, egg cartons, cardboard boxes and cardboard product packaging)
 - Glass jars and bottles
 - Aluminium and steel cans
 - Aerosol cans
 - Hard plastic (PET) bottles and containers
- Soft plastic recycling at local supermarkets (where available) for recycling:
 - Plastic shopping bags and all soft plastic such as food wrappers and product packaging
- Toner cartridge collection services for:
 - Used toner cartridges from photocopiers and laser printers
- E-waste collection services for:
 - Computers, TVs, radios, household appliances
- Mobile phone recycling services for:
 - Old mobile phones
- Whitegoods recycling services for:
 - Refrigerators, ovens, air conditioners or other whitegoods.

To comply with this policy:

- Recyclables should be recycled wherever possible
- Recyclables should not be placed in general waste
- Used toner cartridges should be recycled where possible (for more information, refer to **Planet Ark**)
- Plastic bags should be returned to the local supermarket and placed in bins provided for soft plastics recycling where possible (e.g. Coles and Woolworths have collection points for recycling soft plastic).

Sensitive waste

To reduce risks of data breach (where personal information is accessed by someone unauthorised):

- Sensitive paper waste must be either shredded or disposed of in secure paper recycling bins for collection by a secure document destruction service
- Do not dispose of printed material containing personal or confidential information in general waste
- Computers, computer storage, mobile phones, media and USB memory keys used to store personal information should be disposed of by a qualified secure E-waste service.

E-waste

If placed in general waste, E-waste can be dangerous and harmful to the environment. E-waste:

- Should be disposed of using an E-waste disposal service
- Including mobile phones should be recycled using mobile phone recycling services (see **MobileMuster**)
- Including used toner cartridges should be recycled where possible (see **Planet Ark**)
- including computers, storage devices, media and USB memory keys used to store personal or confidential information should be disposed of using a secure E-waste destruction service.



Handling waste

To reduce risks of injury or illness always wear PPE (personal protective equipment) that is appropriate to the type of waste handled.

Handling of waste bags should be minimised and when handling, workers should wear appropriate PPE to reduce risk of injury.

Waste management responsibilities of key management personnel

The responsibilities of key management personnel include:

- Overall waste management policy including waste reduction strategies
- Ensuring each site is serviced by an appropriate waste management service
- Ensuring workers are trained to dispose of waste and recyclables in correct bins
- Ensuring bins are correctly labelled or sign posted to assist workers to correctly sort waste
- Facilitating and encouraging composting of green organics and raw kitchen scraps where possible
- Ensuring sensitive paper waste is shredded or disposed of using a secure document destruction service rather than disposed of in general waste
- Ensuring sensitive E-waste is disposed of by a secure E-waste destruction service
- Ensuring workers comply with this policy
- Auditing waste management policy and practices.

Waste management responsibilities of workers

The responsibilities of workers include:

- Disposing of waste in the correct bins provided
- Recycling all recyclables as directed by key management personnel
- Not disposing sharps, clinical or pharmaceutical waste in general waste
- Not disposing sensitive waste in general waste or insecure recycling.