

Ebola Medical Waste Management

Purpose

This document is intended to provide hospitals and healthcare providers with key information about the safe handling and disposal of medical waste generated from the care of persons diagnosed with or suspected of having Ebola virus disease (EVD).

- Medical waste generated in the care of patients with known or suspected EVD is subject to procedures set forth by local, state and federal regulations. The West Virginia Infectious Medical Waste Rule, 64CSR56, includes isolation waste in the definition of Infectious Medical Waste. Isolation Waste is defined in the Rule as: *“Wastes generated from the care of a patient who has or is suspected of having any disease listed as Class IV in “Classification of Etiologic Agents on the Basis of Hazard,” published by the United States Centers for Disease Control”*. Ebola virus falls within this classification. Therefore, a health care facility should follow standard operating procedures of storage and handling of isolation waste at their respective facility.
- Basic principles for spills of blood and other potentially infectious materials are outlined in the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogen standard, 29 CFR 1910.1030. See <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodbornepathogens/index.html>.
- Waste contaminated (or suspected to be contaminated) with Ebola virus is a Category A infectious substance regulated as a hazardous material under the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT’s) Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR, Parts 171-180). Requirements in the HMR apply to any material DOT determines is capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce. ¹ For off-site commercial transport of Ebola-associated waste, strict compliance with the HMR is required. For more information on the HMR requirements see: <http://phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/transporting-infectious-substances>.
 - If a person requires a variance to the HMR, that person must apply for a special permit under 49 CFR § 107.105. DOT may grant a special permit if the applicant can demonstrate that an alternative packaging will achieve a safety level that is: (1) at least equal to the safety level required under the HMR, or (2) consistent with the public interest if a required safety level does not exist. See <http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/permits-approvals/special-permits>.
 - DOT granted multiple special permits authorizing the transportation in commerce of certain Ebola-associated waste. See <http://phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/packaging-of-ebola-contaminated-waste>.

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- **Ebola-associated waste that has been appropriately incinerated, autoclaved, or otherwise inactivated is not infectious, does not pose a health risk, and is not considered to be regulated medical waste or a hazardous material under Federal law.** Therefore, such waste is no longer considered a Category A infectious substance and is not subject to the requirements of the HMR.
- The inactivation or incineration of Ebola-associated medical waste within a hospital system may be subject to state, local and OSHA regulations.
 - Onsite inactivation
 - Ebola-associated waste may be inactivated through the use of [appropriate autoclaves](#).
 - Other methods of inactivation (e.g., chemical inactivation) have not been standardized and would need to consider worker safety issues, as well as the potential for triggering other federal safety regulations.
 - Onsite incineration
 - Ebola-associated medical waste can be incinerated. The products of incineration (i.e., the ash) can be transported and disposed of in accordance with standard protocols for hospital waste disposal.
- Ebola-associated waste **disposal** is subject to state and local regulations. Ebola-associated waste that has been appropriately inactivated or incinerated is **not infectious and is not considered to be regulated medical waste or a hazardous material under Federal law.**

Relevant CDC guidance:

- [Interim Guidance for Environmental Infection Control in Hospitals for Ebola Virus](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/environmental-infection-control-in-hospitals.html)(<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/environmental-infection-control-in-hospitals.html>)
- [Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Systems and 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points \(PSAPs\) for Management of Patients with Known or Suspected Ebola Virus Disease in the United States](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-emergency-medical-services-systems-911-public-safety-answering-points-management-patients-known-suspected-united-states.html)(<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-emergency-medical-services-systems-911-public-safety-answering-points-management-patients-known-suspected-united-states.html>)
- [Interim Guidance for Specimen Collection, Transport, Testing, and Submission for Persons Under Investigation for Ebola Virus Disease in the United States](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-specimen-collection-submission-patients-suspected-infection-ebola.html)(<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-specimen-collection-submission-patients-suspected-infection-ebola.html>)

For questions on CDC guidance, please contact **1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)**.

Relevant DOT guidance:

- [Federal Register Notice – Safety Advisory: Packaging and Handling Ebola Virus Contaminated Infectious Waste for Transportation to Disposal Sites \(Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration\)\[PDF - 2 pages\]](#)
- [Department of Transportation Guidance for Transporting Ebola Contaminated items, a Category A Infectious Substance](#)
- [Department of Transportation Guidance for Preparing Packages of Ebola Contaminated Waste for Transportation and Disposal\[PDF - 4 pages\]](#)
- [Transporting Infectious Substances: Q&A](#)
- [Safety Advisory: Packaging and Handling Ebola Virus Contaminated Infectious Waste for Transportation to Disposal Sites\[PDF - 2 pages\]](#)

For questions on DOT guidance or the HMR requirements, please contact DOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA's) Hazardous Materials Information Center at **1-800-467-4922, 9:00 am-5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time.**

Relevant OSHA guidance:

- [OSHA - Ebola Website](#)

For questions on OSHA guidance, please contact **1-800-321-OSHA (6742).**

West Virginia 64CSR56 Infectious Medical Waste Rule:

<http://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/rule.aspx?rule=64-56>

For questions on the West Virginia Infectious Medical Waste Program, please call 304-558-2981.

¹ The HMR applies to interstate, intrastate, and foreign commerce.