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| **Initial Effective Date** | mm/dd/yyyy |
| **Most Recent Revision Date** | mm/dd/yyyy |
| **Authorized/Reviewed By** | Individual or Committee Name |
| **Standard** | 22VAC 40-61-410 |

# Definition (define the infection control practice)

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has defined Regulated Medical Waste in Virginia in 9VAC20-121-90 and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)’s Bloodborne pathogens standard 1910.1030 defines regulated waste.

OSHA provides the following definitions:

**“contaminated sharps”** means any contaminated object that can penetrate the skin including but not limited to needles, scalpels, and broken glass

**“other potentially infectious materials”** means the following human body fluids: semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva in dental procedures, any bodily fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids

**“regulated waste”** means liquid or semi-liquid blood or other potentially infectious materials; contaminated items that would release blood or other potentially infectious materials in a liquid or semi-liquid state if compressed; items that are caked with dried blood or other potentially infectious materials and can release these materials during handling; contaminated sharps; and pathological and microbiological wastes containing blood or other potentially infectious materials.

# Purpose (why this policy/procedure is important)

Some adult day centers may generate regulated waste, which are subject to Federal and State Codes and Regulations. Specific handling requirements are necessary to prevent the potential for communicable disease transmission to staff or participants.

# Responsibility (who is responsible for following this policy/procedure)

All staff in the center who have the potential to generate, encounter, handle or transport regulated medical wastes have the responsibility to know and follow this policy/procedure.

List title/role in center has responsibility for the oversight of implementation and quality of regulated medical waste handling practices.

# Policy

* Regulated waste will be handled and disposed of according to OSHA and VDEQ guidelines, found here: [Regulated Medical Waste | Virginia DEQ](https://www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/land-waste/solid-hazardous-waste/specialty-waste/medical-waste) (or if printed, list location where these guidelines are found for your center).
* Regulated waste will be handled and disposed of according to the Center’s Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan.
  + List location(s) where the plan is stored
* The center will maintain a contract for sharps disposal with a reputable licensed and insured company.
* The center will maintain a contract for other regulated (biohazard) waste disposal with a reputable licensed and insured company.

# Procedure (outline the steps/supplies for performing the practice)

## Contaminated Sharps Disposal

* Make sure a sharps disposal container is in close proximity/available and immediately accessible for use prior to uncapping the needle or performing the injection.
* Perform proper hand hygiene and don new gloves.
* Contaminated needs should not be bent or recapped.
* **Never throw away loose needles and other sharps in trash cans or recycling bins, and never flush them down the toilet.**
* Dispose of contaminated sharp immediately after use in a readily accessible and appropriate sharps disposal container that meets the following criteria:
  + - Closable
    - Puncture resistant
    - Labeled with a bio-hazard symbol or be red in color
    - Leakproof on the sides and bottom
    - Located as close as feasible to the immediate area where sharps are used or can be anticipated to be found (e.g., medication room)
    - Maintained upright throughout use
    - Routinely replaced and not allowed to overfill
    - Are stored in a designated area away from participant activity/programming
* Sharps containers shall be closed for disposal once they are approaching the designated fill line (about three-fourths full).
* Full containers should be moved to the appropriate storage area to await pick-up and disposal. The storage area must be designated with a biohazard symbol on the door.
  + List location(s) where the containers are stored

\*List title/role in center has responsibility for contacting the contracted biohazard waste company and scheduling the pick-up and disposal of regulated medical waste.

* Insert additional center-specific plans, regarding the pick-up and disposal of biohazard waste.
* Ultimate disposition and disposal of contaminated sharps must be done according to Virginia DEQ regulations.
* Doff gloves and perform proper hand hygiene.

## Other Types of Regulated Waste

* Perform proper hand hygiene and don new gloves.
* Regulated waste shall be placed in an appropriate container that is:
  + Closable
  + Constructed to contain contents and prevent leakage of fluids
  + Labeled with a biohazard symbol or be red in color
* \*List title/role in center has responsibility for contacting the contracted biohazard waste company and scheduling the pick-up and disposal of regulated medical waste.
* Insert additional center-specific plans, regarding the pick-up, disposal of regulated waste, and documentation.
* Ultimate disposition and disposal of regulated waste must be done according to Virginia DEQ regulations.
* Doff gloves and perform proper hand hygiene.
* In the event of an accidental employee biohazard exposure or accidental needle stick, refer to workplace health policy.

# Guidelines and Resources for Policy/Procedure Development

* [2022 Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). 1910.1030 - Bloodborne Pathogens Standard](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1030)
* [2022 Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Regulated Medical Waste](https://www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/land-waste/solid-hazardous-waste/specialty-waste/medical-waste)
* [2021 Food and Drug Administration. Sharps Disposal Containers in Health Care Facilities](https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/safely-using-sharps-needles-and-syringes-home-work-and-travel/sharps-disposal-containers-health-care-facilities)
* [Regulated Medical Waste Management Regulations, Amendment 3](https://www.deq.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/17229/638144015985430000)

**Notes and Recommendations**

* Other participant care and center operation policies and procedures should reinforce regulated/biohazard waste disposal as a critical step in a center’s infection prevention program.
* For all staff and volunteer training, consider the use of quizzes/tests at the conclusion of training, return demonstration, or teach back of content to ensure comprehension.
* Staff will be trained at hire, evaluated for competence with feedback and training will be reinforced at least annually.
* Consider utilizing an audit tool for compliance with regulated biohazard waste disposal and implement an auditing schedule for ongoing sustainment of this policy.
* All sources, standards, guidelines, and resources should be verified annually, or more frequently as your center policy dictates, to ensure the most up to date information is provided.
* Consider outlining where sharps container locations are within your individual center and include that information in your policy.
* Consider addressing Occupational and Safety Health Administration (OSHA) standards for prevention and management of exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
* “Other sharps” is a term for objects with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin, such as broken vases or coffee cups. The center should assess and evaluate which items, upon breaking, could become sharp and potentially break the skin, and would need to be disposed of according to this policy.
* A center should consider outlining their center specific process for ensuring pick up and disposal of regulated/biohazard waste.
* When contracting with a third party ensure your contract includes information about their proper waste disposal protocols.
* Links to biohazard symbol:[Red Biohazard Signs - ClipArt Best](http://www.clipartbest.com/red-biohazard-signs); [Printable Biological Hazard Sign – Free Printable Signs (free-printable-signs.com)](https://free-printable-signs.com/biological-hazard-sign/)