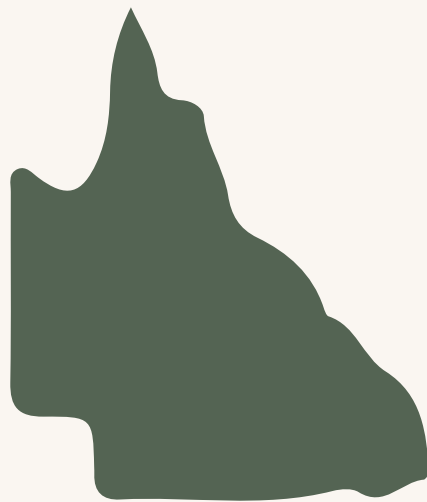
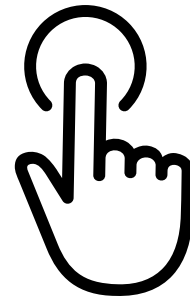


**PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE  
GUIDELINES AND POLICIES  
QUEENSLAND**



**'Go there' Buttons can be found throughout the document. Clicking on them will result in the relevant linked policy opening in your browser.**



#### **DISCLAIMER**

This document was created by DrugWaste International for the sole purpose of education and information provision. This document has not been created for commercial purposes and should not be viewed as such. It includes relevant links to governing policies and documents. All credit is given to the original authors. We encourage clinicians to read the linked policies/guidelines in their entirety to ensure complete understanding. This document is not a completely exhaustive or comprehensive list. Policies and frameworks are constantly being updated. DrugWaste International will attempt to ensure that all information presented is current, however, it is the full responsibility of the reader to ensure they engage with the links to ensure currency of resources.

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# DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION OF DIVERSION-RISK MEDICINE WASTE

## Medicine and Poisons Act 2019 – Factsheet July 2022

**Purpose:** This factsheet provides important information regarding destruction and disposal of medicine waste under the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 (MPA). (Queensland Health, 2022, pg. 1).

### KEY COMPONENTS



- **Page 1:** Disposal vs Destruction. Who can dispose of diversion risk medicine waste.
- **Page 2:** Environmental requirements
- **Page 5:** How to destroy of diversion risk medicine waste

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

**Disposal** of waste from a regulated substance means discard, destroy or abandon waste.

**Destruction** is a specific and regulated process. Only relevant individuals can dispose of diversion risk medication. Destruction requires the drug must be rendered unusable and unidentifiable. This can be achieved through using a commercial product that will prevent retrieval.

**Best practice is to destroy waste to reduce possibility of diversion.**

**Pharmaceuticals persist** in the environment if they are not destroyed and disposed of correctly.

They strictly mandate that pharmaceutical waste **MUST NOT** be disposed of in such a way that causes environmental contamination.

Therefore, pharmaceuticals cannot be;

- **Disposed of via drains or sewers**
- **Sent to landfill.**

**Pharmaceutical waste must be destroyed and then sent to high temperature incineration.**

# CLINICAL AND RELATED WASTE

**Purpose:** Clinical and related waste must be handled, stored, packaged, labelled and transported appropriately to minimise the potential for contact with the waste and to reduce the risk to the environment from accidental release. This guideline describes the management of clinical or related waste in Queensland (Department of Environment and Science, 2019, pg. 4).

## KEY COMPONENTS



- **Page 6:** Segregation of Waste
- **Page 16:** What is pharmaceutical waste and how to dispose of it

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

**Waste must be segregated** into the relevant categories set-out by the government, failing to segregate waste is an offence. These categories are defined as:

**Clinical waste** - animal waste, sharps, human tissue, specimens.

**Related waste** - chemicals, cytotoxic, radioactive, human body parts and pharmaceutical waste.

**General waste**

Therefore, disposal of pharmaceutical waste into a sharps bin is non-compliant.

Pharmaceutical waste does not include empty capsules, bottles, ampoules etc. and **should be segregated from these other types of waste.**

### HOW SHOULD IT BE DISPOSED OF?

**High temperature incineration** is the only acceptable method for treatment of pharmaceutical waste.

This includes all regulated pharmaceutical waste (S4 & S8 Medication)

Special care must be taken to ensure Antibiotics are sent to incineration, as antibiotic resistance is highlighted as an issue if they end up in sewers or landfill.

# SUMMARY

Pharmaceutical waste disposal is highly regulated in Queensland.

- Pharmaceutical waste must be segregated from sharps waste and general waste at point of disposal. Failing to segregate according to the guidelines is an offence.
- Pharmaceutical waste must be sent to high temperature incineration to ensure destruction. This includes ALL S4/S8 medications.

The Queensland government puts a high emphasis on **preventing diversion and mitigating environmental impact** when disposing of drugs.

Clinicians must take all reasonable steps to ensure they are compliant with the relevant legislation.

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

[www.drugwaste.com.au](http://www.drugwaste.com.au)



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# References

Disposal and destruction of diversion-risk medicine waste. Medicines and Poisons act 2019 – Factsheet July 2022. Queensland Health. July 2022. [Disposal and destruction of diversion-risk medicine waste \(health.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/medicines-and-poisons/medicines-and-poisons-act-2019-factsheet-july-2022)

Clinical and related waste. Queensland Government, Department of Environment and Science. Version 4.02. July 2019. [ESR/2015/1571 Guideline: Clinical and related waste \(des.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.des.qld.gov.au/clinical-and-related-waste)