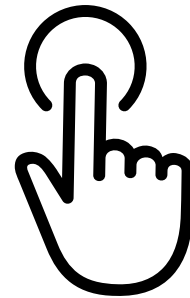


**PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE  
GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**



**'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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# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR CLINICAL AND RELATED WASTE MANAGEMENT

**Purpose:** Describes the minimum requirements to be adhered to by WA Health to ensure clinical and related waste is segregated, stored, transported and disposed of in a manner that minimises the risk of public exposure to potentially contaminated material and minimises environmental impact. (© Department of Health (Western Australia) 2021, pg. 2).

## KEY COMPONENTS



- **Page 3:** Definitions of different waste categories.
- **Page 5:** 5.1 Specific guidelines for handling and disposal of healthcare waste.
- **Page 9:** Information about which waste streams must be incinerated.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

The Code of Practice outlines a minimum standard for healthcare workers in relation to waste handling.

### **1. It mandates the SEGREGATION OF WASTE AT TIME OF GENERATION.**

These categories are distinguished and defined, pharmaceutical waste being its 'own' waste stream. Therefore, healthcare workers should be empowered to segregate their waste at "Time of Generation" with appropriate vessels i.e., pharmaceutical waste Bin, Clinical waste bin, Sharps bin, Cytotoxic waste bin etc.

**2. It mandates that pharmaceutical waste MUST BE INCINERATED** (along with recognisable body parts and cytotoxic waste) - Unlike sharps or general clinical waste, which can be autoclaved and macerated.

To ensure pharmaceuticals are incinerated, not autoclaved/macerated they must enter a waste stream BOUND FOR INCINERATION and NOT be placed in sharps bins or general waste bins.

# DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS POLICY DIRECTIVE

**Purpose:** ensuring environmentally responsible disposal of medications to ensure there is no risk to the public of being reused or diverted. (WA DOH).

## KEY COMPONENTS



- Disposal of Medicines
- Schedule 8 Medicines

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Pharmaceuticals can already be detected in the environment and therefore clinicians must engage with compliant disposal methods mitigate environmental risk. Furthermore, measures must be taken to ensure drugs are not divertible.

- Schedule 8 medications must be made **UNIDENTIFIABLE and UNUSABLE at point of disposal.**
- Schedule 8 medication should be disposed of in a **GEL DISPOSAL KIT** that prevents retrieval.

DrugWaste International is currently the **ONLY** provider of a dedicated drug disposal gel solution that suspends schedule 8 medications, rendering them unidentifiable and unusable.

# SUMMARY

The Department of Health mandates the categorisation of waste. Disposal methods will differ dependant on what category waste falls under.

In WA, healthcare facilities are required to segregate waste at point of generation.

- In WA, Pharmaceutical waste must be **incinerated**.
- In WA, the disposal of Schedule 8 medications requires that they are **rendered unusable and unidentifiable at point of disposal**.
- WA Health recommends a **gel disposal kit** for the disposal of Schedule 8 medications to ensure safety.

Clinicians have a legal responsibility to dispose of pharmaceuticals responsibly, to mitigate the possibilities of drug diversion and to minimise harm to the environment.

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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



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# References

Code of practice for clinical and related waste management. Government of Western Australia, Department of Health. Public Health Act 2016, Revised February 2021. [Code of practice for clinical and related waste management \(health.wa.gov.au\)](http://health.wa.gov.au)

Disposal of Medicines: Information Bulletin. Government of Western Australia, Department of Health. [Disposal of medicines \(health.wa.gov.au\)](http://health.wa.gov.au)