

Medical Waste Guidance

The purpose of this program is to protect the general public, health care facility and solid waste management personnel from injury and exposure to pathogenic organisms in medical wastes. As mandated by the Medical Waste Management Act, (Health and Safety Code, Sections 117600 - 118360), the Department of Health Services, (DHS) Environmental Management Branch regulates the storage, transportation, and disposal of regulated medical waste.

The Medical Waste Management Act (MWMA), Section 117705 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) considers any person whose act or process produces medical waste to be a “medical waste generator” in California (e.g. a facility or business that generates, and/or stores medical waste onsite). Medical waste generators may be either large quantity generators (generate 200 lbs/month or more), or small quantity generators (generate equal or less than 200 lbs/month).

Medical waste is often described as any solid waste that is generated in the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of human beings or animals, in research pertaining thereto, or in the production or testing of biologicals, including **but not limited to:**

- blood-soaked bandages
- culture dishes and other glassware
- discarded surgical gloves - after surgery
- discarded surgical instruments - scalpels
- needles - used to give shots or draw blood
- cultures, stocks, swabs used to inoculate cultures
- removed body organs - tonsils, appendices, limbs, etc.
- lancets - the little blades the doctor pricks your finger with to get a drop of blood

The Act requires all medical waste generators that treat their medical waste onsite to register and obtain a permit from our Department. Large quantity medical waste generators (generate 220 lb/month or more) who **do not** treat their medical waste onsite are only required to register with our Department. In addition, if you generate less than 20 pounds of medical waste per week and/or transport less than 20 pounds at one time, you need to apply for a Limited Quantity Hauling Exemption permit. If you are planning to let other small medical waste generators store their medical waste at your facility, you need to apply for the Common Storage Facility Permit.

The following information will assist you in understanding your responsibilities under the law requiring Medical Waste Facilities to register and obtain permits for the storage, transfer, treatment and disposal of medical waste. Please read the enclosed information carefully before filling out the forms.

WHO MUST REGISTER, OBTAIN A PERMIT OR A HAULERS EXEMPTION

1. Medical waste generators or activities that are in one of the following categories:
2. Large generators (200 or more lbs/month) of medical waste.
3. Any generator or health care professional who treats medical waste onsite.
4. Any person who operates a common storage facility.
5. A transfer station operation.
6. Limited Quantity Hauler Exemption - Any person generating less than 20 pounds per week or 80 pounds per month and hauling less than 20 pounds of medical waste at any one time.
7. Any health care professional who is licensed by the State Licensing and Certified and is one of our listed facility types, list under section 117995.

WHO IS EXEMPT FROM REGISTRATION, PERMIT AND EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS

1. Small Quantity Generators (SQG) (less than 200 lbs./month) who do not treat waste onsite.
2. SQG who use licensed hazardous waste haulers to transport medical waste offsite.
3. SQG who use a common storage facility.

HOW TO COMPLY

1. Complete the Pre-Application Questionnaire. If your answers indicate you **are not** required to register as a medical waste generator or meet the hauler exemption, then complete the certification on page 4 of the Information Packet for Medical Waste Generators and return form to the Department.
2. If you **are** required to register as a medical waste generator, as indicated by affirmative answers to any of the questions 2, 3, 4, and 5, on the Pre-Application Questionnaire, then:
 - Complete the Registration Application, the Management Plan, and complete the Medical Waste Treatment Permit Application, Limited-Quantity Hauling Exemption Application, or the Common Storage Facility Permit Application, if applicable.

Medical Waste Facilities include, but are not limited to:

- Hospitals,
- Chronic Dialysis Clinics,
- Physician's Offices,
- Medical and Dental Offices,
- Education and Research Centers,
- Laboratories, Research Laboratories
- Surgery Centers
- Skilled Nurses Facilities
- Veterinary Hospitals, Veterinary Clinics.

The California Medical Waste Management Act is codified in the Health and Safety Code, Division 104, Part 14. For a copy of this law, lists of registered medical waste haulers, medical waste treatment facilities, alternate treatment technologies, compliance tools and a variety of other pertinent information please visit the [California Medical Waste Management Program \(Program\)](#)

Should you have any questions, please contact Beronia Beniamine at 209-525-6746 or any Hazardous Materials District Inspector staff at 209-525-6700.

To Complete an Application for a Limited Quantity Hauling Exemption, [click here](#)

To complete an Application for a Common Storage Facility Permit, [click here](#)

To complete an Application for Medical Waste Generation, Treatment, and Transfer permit, [click here](#)

To Review the Information packet for Medical Waste Generators, [click here](#)