SEC-006 Regulated Medical Waste Management

Effective Date Thursday, June 30, 2005

Status Final

Last Revised Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Policy Type University

Contact Office Environmental Health and Safety

Oversight Executive
Vice President for Research

Applies To Academic Division, the Medical Center, and the College at Wise.

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Reason for Policy

To protect University faculty, staff, students, visitors, and the public from exposure to potentially disease-causing waste materials and to ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations.

Definition of Terms

Regulated Medical Waste

Description

Any waste materials capable of producing a disease by an organism likely to be pathogenic to healthy humans, such as the following:

- Discarded cultures and stocks of microorganisms, specimens, vaccines and associated items containing organisms likely to be pathogenic to healthy humans.
- Human blood and certain body fluids as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- Items saturated or caked with human blood or body fluids that would release blood/body fluid in a liquid or semi liquid state if compressed or would flake if handled.
- Human tissue or anatomical wastes.
- Sharps (needles, syringes with attached needles, scalpel blades, lancets, guide wires, and glass pasture pipettes, etc.).
- Animal carcasses, body parts, bedding and related wastes when intentionally infected with organisms likely to be pathogenic to healthy humans.
- Any residue or contaminated soil, water, or other debris resulting from the clean-up of a spill of infectious waste.
- Any solid waste contaminated by or mixed with infectious waste.
- Products of recombinant DNA or synthetic nucleic acid experiments as defined by the National Institutes of Health Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules.

Policy Statement

Any waste that meets the above definition must be considered regulated medical waste (RMW) and must be disposed in accordance with Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulations. University of Virginia faculty, staff, and students must identify and segregate all waste materials properly. Waste that does not meet the definition of RMW (e.g., Radioactive, Hazardous Waste, regular trash, or recyclable materials, etc.) must not be placed within the RMW stream.

Personnel handling RMW must be appropriately trained regarding Virginia DEQ and Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations to properly identify and dispose of materials that qualify as RMW.

Compliance with Policy:
Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies.

In addition, Virginia DEQ can enforce civil charges and penalties. Violations of federal or state law may result in significant financial penalties for the University. Such penalties will not be paid from central University resources but must be borne by the laboratory, department, College, or School responsible for the facility in violation.

Direct questions about this policy to Environmental Health and Safety.

Procedures

Waste on the EHS Website.
UVA Medical Center Infection Control Website.

Related Information

Training and additional RMW Guidance can be found on the EHS Website and the UVA Medical Center Infection Control Website.
Virginia Regulated Medical Waste Regulations
For Radioactive and Hazardous waste, see SEC-004: Collection and Disposal of Regulated Hazardous Materials & Hazardous (Chemical) Waste

Major Category Safety, Security and Environmental Quality

Next Scheduled Review Saturday, October 7, 2028

Revision History

Confirmed with minor edit to Policy Summary 10/7/25; Revised 2/18/22; Added Compliance section 7/21/21; Updated 7/21/11.

Policy Summary

All regulated medical waste must be properly identified, segregated, placed into proper containers, and disposed of according to state regulations.

Supercedes Policy Text

XIV.I.1 Regulated Medical Waste Management

Approved By Policy Review Committee

Approved Date Thursday, June 30, 2005