

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL
PHARMACY SERVICES**

CODE: 7.17.0
DATE: 4/4/94
REVISED: 4/19/22
APPROVED: Tinh Tran, Pharm.D.
MEC APPROVED: 5/13/15
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SECTION: **PROCUREMENT**

SUBJECT: **MEDICAL (PHARMACEUTICAL)/HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL**

POLICY

Policy addressing the proper disposal of non-returnable medications, biologicals, and other medical (pharmaceutical)/bio-hazardous material returned to the Pharmacy salvage area will be accomplished via the interdepartmental coordination between Pharmacy, Nursing, Facilities Management, Support Services and a contracted outside vendor. This policy will be for the following hospital:

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center
7601 E. Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 385-7111

PROCEDURE

Outdated, deleted from formulary, and recalled medications are to be returned to respective manufacturer for credit, according to manufacturer's return/credit policy or disposed via contracted vendor(s). It is estimated that the bulk of pharmaceutical waste will be non-hazardous and average about 50 pounds per month. Hazardous waste will average less than 5 pounds per month.

On the Patient Unit/Clinic/OR:

1. Pharmaceutical waste will be contained separately from other medical waste at the point of generation. A hard plastic, rigid, puncture-resistant, leak resistant, and sealable pharmaceutical waste container with an absorbent will be utilized for all discarded medications (e.g. tablets/capsules; partial vials).
2. Empty glass vials or vials with trace amounts of contents must be placed in a Sharp's container (except for vials with hazardous medications, which should be placed in the pharmaceutical waste container or Chemo-tainer as appropriate and handled as hazardous waste).
 - a. A container (vial, bottle, syringe, etc.) is defined as empty if the following conditions are met:
 1. If the material which the container or inner liner held is pourable, no material can be poured or drained from the container or inner liner when held in any orientation, including, but no limited to, when tilted or inverted.
 2. If the material which the container or inner liner held is not pourable, no material or waste remains in the container or inner liner that can feasibly be removed.
 - b. A mixture of non-hazardous pharmaceutical waste and hazardous pharmaceutical waste will be considered hazardous waste, treated as hazardous waste, and placed in the hazardous waste container. Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used when handling hazardous waste
 - c. Waste from chemotherapeutic agents and their containers will be placed in a hard plastic, rigid, puncture-resistant, leak resistant, and sealable waste container specific for these agents and labeled with the words "Chemotherapy Waste", "Chemo", or other label approved by the

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Approved By: 

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Facility.

3. Empty plastic vials or plastic vials with trace amounts of contents are to be discarded as regular waste (except for vials with hazardous medications, which should be placed in the pharmaceutical waste container or Chemo-tainer as appropriate and handled as hazardous waste).
 - a. A container is defined as empty if the following conditions are met:
 1. If the material which the container or inner liner held is pourable, no material can be poured or drained from the container or inner liner when held in any orientation, including, but no limited to, when tilted or inverted.
 2. If the material which the container or inner liner held is not pourable, no material or waste remains in the container or inner liner that can feasibly be removed.
 - b. A mixture of non-hazardous pharmaceutical waste and hazardous pharmaceutical waste will be considered hazardous waste, treated as hazardous waste, and placed in the hazardous waste stream. Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used when handling hazardous waste.
 - c. Waste from chemotherapeutic agents and their containers will be placed in a hard plastic, rigid, puncture-resistant, leak resistant, and sealable waste container specific for these agents and labeled with the words “Chemotherapy Waste”, “Chemo”, or other label approved by the Facility.
4. Unused parenteral nutrition bags, large volume I.Vs, and I.V. piggybacks will be sent to the Inpatient Pharmacy for disposition.
5. Partially infused parenteral nutrition solutions, large volume I.Vs, and I.V. piggyback solutions will be retained in the original bag and disposed as pharmaceutical waste in the pharmaceutical waste container. Exception: plain I.V. solutions or I.V. solutions with electrolytes and/or vitamins are to be discarded in the sink and suspected infectious solutions or solutions from isolated patients will be discarded in “red” or biohazardous waste bags.
6. Excess medication from tubex syringes, syringes, or ampules will be discarded in the pharmaceutical waste container in its original container; vial, syringe, etc.
7. Aerosolized pharmaceuticals will be sent to the Inpatient Pharmacy separately from the pharmaceutical waste for disposition.
8. For wastage of non-reusable controlled substances see Controlled Substances Handling Policy and Procedure 3.13.0.
9. Medications that fall under the hazardous toxic classification (see “Hazardous Toxic Waste Log”) will be placed in the pharmaceutical waste container. The individual will log the date, their initials, and quantity for all hazardous toxic medications discarded in this container on the Hazardous Toxic Waste Log.
10. All bulk discarded partially-used medications in containers, e.g. external topicals, will be sent to the Inpatient Pharmacy for disposition
11. The pharmaceutical waste containers will be picked up and properly disposed of by the contracted

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- vendor.
12. All non-returnable drugs and supplies will be separated, properly labeled as either pharmaceutical or hazardous waste, and secured in the designated Pharmacy area. The accumulation area utilized by Pharmacy to store containers of pharmaceutical waste will be secured to prevent or deny access by unauthorized persons and posted with a warning sign adjacent to or on the entry door. The sign will be in English and Spanish and state: “CAUTION-BIOHAZARDOUS WASTE STORAGE AREA-UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS KEEP OUT,” and in Spanish: “ CUIDADO-ZONA DE RESIDUOUS BIOLOGICOS PELIGROSOS-PROHIBIDA LA ENTRADA A PERSONAS NO AUTORIZADAS.”
 13. In the event of a pharmaceutical spill, the area of the spill will be blocked off and an absorbent used on the spill. Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used. The soaked absorbent will be discarded in the appropriate container, which will be a hard plastic, rigid, puncture-resistant, leak resistant, and sealable waste container that is properly labeled. The container will be placed in the appropriate waste stream. Housekeeping will be called and the spill area treated by procedures adopted by Housekeeping. In the event of a hazardous spill, the spill will be handled according to Hospital policy #A405.
 14. The contracted vendor is responsible for the disposal of non-returnable and medical (pharmaceutical)/bio-hazardous waste drugs. The vendor will pick up the medical (pharmaceutical)/bio-hazardous waste from Pharmacy and deliver the materials to their facility. The contracted vendor facility meets or exceeds state and federal regulations for clean air and environmental standards. All required documents are filed with the appropriate agency and copies will be sent to the facility.
 - a. The reverse-distributor vendor possesses permits and licenses from the following:
 - < DEA
 - < Respective State Department of Health
 - < EPA Hazardous Waste Generator
 - < WholesalerEXP Pharmaceutical Services Corp.
48021 Warm Springs Blvd.
Fremont, CA 94539 (800) 350-0397
 - b. Medical waste vendor.
Stericycle, Inc.
2775 E. 26th Street
Vernon, CA 90023
(323) 362-3000
 15. Tracking documents and treatment records will be maintained for a period of three years.
 16. In the event of a disruption in service as a result of a natural disaster or an equipment failure,

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pharmaceutical waste will be secured in the storage areas designated in the Pharmacy until the pharmaceutical waste can be properly disposed of in the proper waste stream.

17. Facility contact information for matters regarding medical waste.
 - a. Facilities Management Director, (562) 385-7291
 - b. Infection Control Director, (562) 385-6744

All information provided in this policy and procedure is complete and accurate.

Tinh Tran, Pharm. D., Pharmacy Services Chief III

Date: _____