

# Infectious Waste Guidance for Veterinarians

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for handling and disposal of infectious waste unique to a veterinary practice.

## APPLICABILITY

Any business that generates infectious waste is considered an infectious waste generator and is subject to Ohio's infectious waste regulations. An infectious waste generator is classified as a small generator when less than 50 pounds of infectious waste are generated per calendar month and a large generator when 50 pounds or more of infectious waste are generated per calendar month. Veterinary practices should also read the guidance document for small generators or large generators of infectious waste for more detailed information regarding proper handling, packaging, storing, shipping, and treatment of infectious waste. The handling and cleaning of contaminated reusable materials is not governed by the infectious waste regulations.

## DEFINITIONS

**"Infectious agent"** means a type of microorganism, helminth, or virus that causes or significantly contributes to the cause of increased morbidity or mortality of human beings.

**"Zoonotic agent"** means a type of microorganism, helminth, or virus that causes disease in vertebrate animals and that is transmissible to human beings and causes or significantly contributes to the cause of increased morbidity or mortality of human beings.

## INFECTIOUS WASTES GENERATED IN VETERINARY PRACTICES

- Carcasses, tissues, organs, body parts and any other pathological wastes from animals that died due to a zoonotic or infectious agent
- Carcasses, tissues, organs, body parts and any other pathological wastes from animals that were diagnosed with or intentionally exposed to a zoonotic or infectious agent during research, production of biologicals, or testing of pharmaceuticals.
- Animal blood specimens and blood products that were or are likely to have been exposed to a zoonotic or infectious agent.
- Bedding and wastes from the enclosures of animals that have been isolated because of a diagnosed zoonotic disease
- Sharps (including, but not limited to, hypodermic needles, syringes, and scalpel blades) used in the diagnosis, treatment, immunization of animals, or testing of pharmaceuticals.
- Cultures and stocks of infectious agents and associated biologicals
- Any other waste materials the generator designates as infectious wastes.

## HANDLING & DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

**Animal carcasses:** All carcasses of animals that die from a zoonotic disease are infectious waste. However, the handling and disposal of these carcasses varies depending on the source of infection or status of the generator.

*Animal was **not intentionally infected***

Small generators of infectious waste are not required to include the weight of the carcass in the monthly generation log and have the option

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of disposing of the carcass as regular solid waste or sending it to a licensed infectious waste treatment facility. Large generators of infectious waste must always manage and dispose of animal carcasses as infectious waste.

## Animal was *intentionally* infected

The weight of the carcass must be recorded in the monthly generation log. Again, small generators have the option of disposing of the carcass as regular solid waste or sending it to a licensed infectious waste treatment facility.

## Animal dies from *other* causes

If an animal dies from natural causes, an accident, or a disease that is not zoonotic, the carcass is not an infectious waste and may be disposed of as regular solid waste.

## Other carcass disposal considerations

The infectious waste regulations do not prohibit veterinarians from returning deceased pets to their owners. Veterinarians are encouraged to advise the family on safe handling practices of a deceased pet when the pet dies of a disease transmissible to humans.

For disposal of livestock, please contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Industry at (614) 728-6220 or visit this website <http://www.ohioagriculture.gov/animal/>.

**Pathological Wastes:** Tissues, organs, body parts and any other pathological wastes removed from animals during surgery autopsy or for diagnostic evaluation, are not considered infectious wastes unless the animal was exposed to a zoonotic or infectious agent. The veterinarian must determine if the pathological waste is an infectious waste. Small generators must record the weight of infectious pathological waste in the monthly generation log.

**Vaccines of Zoonotic Agents:** Vaccines of zoonotic agents are required to be handled in the same manner as cultures and stocks of

infectious agents. They may be transported to a licensed infectious waste treatment facility or treated on site. You may render the vaccines noninfectious by using a chemical treatment of 15% vol/vol of hypochlorite (household bleach) solution. The solution must be made immediately before use and all vaccines must be submerged for a minimum of 20 minutes.

**Services provided outside the office:** A veterinarian who visits a farm or racetrack to administer care or who participates in a community service activity, such as a vaccination clinic, is responsible for properly managing and disposing of all infectious wastes generated during the visit. Infectious sharps must be placed in a sharps container and all other infectious waste should be placed in a plastic bag (small generators) or biohazard bag (large generators). All infectious wastes must be taken back to the office for disposal and quantification (small generators).

## APPLICABLE RULES

OAC	3745-27-01	3745-27-33
	3745-27-30	3745-27-34
	3745-27-31	3745-27-35
	3745-27-32	3745-27-36

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Infectious Waste Unit** (614) 644-2621  
PO Box 1049  
Columbus, OH 43216

**DSIWM Supervisors:**

Central District Office	(614) 728-3778
Northeast District Office	(330) 963-1200
Northwest District Office	(419) 352-8461
Southeast District Office	(740) 385-8501
Southwest District Office	(937) 285-6357