

July 2004

# Disposal of Infectious Waste Generated at Trauma Scenes

## Who is responsible for the cleanup of blood or other infectious wastes from a trauma scene?

The answer depends on who generated the waste and where the waste is located. A *trauma scene* is a location soiled by, or contaminated with, human or animal blood, human body fluids, body parts or other wastes from the scene of a serious human injury, illness or death. A trauma scene can occur anywhere, such as on a sidewalk, on a street, in a home, inside a vehicle, at a sporting event or inside a public building.

Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3745-27-36 (A)(7) states that persons in the **business** engaged primarily to clean up crime or accident scenes, who generate **fifty** pounds or more of infectious wastes per calendar month are subject to the Infectious Waste regulations.

This fact sheet provides answers to frequently asked questions and guidance about the disposal of infectious waste generated at trauma scenes.

## What is infectious waste?

Infectious waste includes but is not limited to contaminated lab wastes, cultures and stocks of infectious agents, human and animal blood, body parts and contaminated needles. Infectious waste is not the same as solid waste (trash or garbage).

## Who is a generator of infectious waste?

Hospitals, clinics, medical research centers, diagnostic laboratories, animal hospitals, ambulances, fire departments and private practice physicians are all types of facilities that produce infectious waste.

## Who is responsible for the cleanup of blood on the pavement or office building floor?

The cleanup requirements would pertain to the person or entity's status performing the cleanup. If the person or entity generates less than 50 pounds per calendar month, the small generator requirements would apply. Conversely, if a person or entity generates 50 pounds or more, then the large generator requirements would apply.

## What can I use to clean up blood?

If there is blood that remains at the trauma scene after the police investigation unit departs, the area can be cleaned up with a bleach and water solution. In addition, you may contact a business that provides this type of cleanup service.

## Are emergency medical service (EMS) vehicles responsible for the cleanup of infectious wastes?

Yes, after the patient is cared for it is the responsibility of the emergency medical technician to properly handle and manage any infectious waste generated at the scene.

## How are sharps handled?

All used discarded hypodermic needles, syringes, and scalpel blades are considered infectious waste and must be placed into a properly labeled sharps container.

## What options are available to clean up dried blood on a sofa, mattress or carpeting?

The household items mentioned above can be properly cleaned and disinfected for subsequent use. If a generator designates an entire household item as an infectious waste, then disposal of the bulky item may pose a problem. The Infectious Waste Unit cautions cutting up the item because it creates aerosols or increases the potential of transmission of an infectious agent. Contact your local licensed landfill for disposal of household items.

## Do I need a special permit from the Ohio EPA to clean up or transport trauma scene waste?

A certificate of registration is required if 50 pounds or more of infectious waste is generated during any calendar month. If the business also wishes to transport the infectious waste, a certificate of registration as a transporter must be obtained. Please call the Infectious Waste Unit at (614) 644-2621 for more information and application requirements.



---

---

# Disposal of Infectious Waste Generated at Trauma Scenes

---

## How should infectious waste be handled and managed properly?

All infectious sharps and unused sharps are placed into a sharps container. Other types of infectious waste are placed into a biohazard bag.

## What happens to the wastes after proper packaging?

After proper containment of the wastes, small generators may dispose of the items in the regular garbage. Large generators are required to contact a registered transporter to transport its infectious waste to a licensed treatment facility in Ohio or another state.

## When trauma occurs in a home, who is responsible for the cleanups?

The resident can dispose of any infectious waste not properly managed by the EMS. The waste can be disposed of into the resident's solid waste stream. Ohio EPA's Infectious Waste program does not have the authority to regulate wastes generated by the resident and disposed of in the home's solid waste stream. Residents may also contact a company that specializes in cleanup of trauma sites for assistance.

## For more information

For more information about disposal options for trauma scene wastes, please contact your local health department, Ohio EPA district office, or the **Infectious Waste Unit** of Ohio EPA's Division of Solid and Infectious Waste Management at (614) 644-2621.

## Ohio EPA District Offices:

**Northeast District Office:**  
330-963-1200

**Northwest District Office:**  
419-352-8461

**Central District Office:**  
614-728-3778

**Southeast District Office:**  
740-385-8501

**Southwest District Office:**  
937-285-6357