

WASTE DISPOSAL

The Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) has identified biological waste as waste that requires special handling to protect human health or the environment. Materials that may be effectively sterilized in an autoclave may be placed in an autoclave bag, sterilized, and placed in the regular trash. If an autoclave is not available, or the materials are not appropriate for autoclaving, place them in an approved red/orange biohazard waste bag and contact EHSRM for proper disposal through a SFA contracted biological waste contractor. Biological waste is comprised of the following:

A. Microbiological Waste

- Discarded cultures and stocks of infectious agents and associated biologicals.
- Discarded cultures of specimens from medical, pathological, pharmaceutical, research, clinical, commercial, and industrial laboratories.
- Discarded live and attenuated vaccines, but excluding the empty containers thereof.
- Discarded, used disposable culture dishes.
- Discarded, used disposable devices used to transfer, inoculate, or mix cultures. Note: In vitro tissue cultures that have not been intentionally exposed to pathogens are exempt from these regulations.

B. Animal Waste

Animal waste items known to be pathogenic must be autoclaved prior to disposal in the regular trash or placed in an approved red/orange biohazard waste bag for proper disposal. Animal waste that does not contain pathogens may be placed in the regular trash. Use sealable containers such as buckets for carcasses, body parts, or blood and take them directly to the dumpster or landfill to minimize odors and additional handling by custodial staff. Animal waste includes the following:

- Carcasses of animals.
- Body parts of animals.
- Whole blood, serum, plasma, and/or other blood components from animals.
- Bedding of animals intentionally exposed to pathogens.

C. Human Blood and Blood Products

- Human blood, serum, plasma, other blood components, and body fluids.
- Disposable items contaminated with human blood or body fluids.

D. Pathological Waste

- Laboratory specimens of blood and tissue after completion of laboratory examination.
- Anatomical remains, human materials, and tissues.

E. Sharps

All sharps described below must be disposed of in an approved sharps container displaying the universal biohazard symbol.

Sharps include but are not limited to the following, regardless of contamination:

- Hypodermic needles.

- Hypodermic syringes with attached needles.
- Scalpel blades.
- Razor blades, disposable razors, and disposable scissors used in dissection, surgery or other laboratory procedures.
- Glass pipettes.
- Broken glassware.
- Specimen tubes.
- Blood culture bottles.
- Microscope slides.