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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN, JR.
Governor

October 21, 2014

AFL 14-24

TO: Acute Psychiatric Hospitals
General Acute Care Hospitals

SUBJECT: Ebola Virus Disease Medical Waste Management

This All Facilities Letter (AFL) is intended to notify all hospitals that the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has developed interim guidelines for Ebola Virus Disease medical waste management. The interim guidelines provide both general guidance for Ebola medical waste management based on federal guidelines and standards, as well as more specific guidance regarding packaging, labelling, and treatment. The attached interim guidelines can be found at the following link:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/Pages/default.aspx>

On-site treatment of Ebola medical waste (by steam sterilization) may be performed in compliance with the interim guidelines. If on-site treatment is not available, a hospital may package the waste to be transported to an incinerator at an out-of-state facility. California allows for the incineration of Ebola hospital waste; however, California's last medical waste incinerator closed in 2001. The states that currently have operating incinerators are Alabama, Maryland, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Utah and Texas.

CDPH recommends that all hospital Environmental Services personnel and Infection Control staff work together to develop facility-specific protocols for safe handling of Ebola-related medical waste.

Additional information can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Ebola Medical Waste Management Website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/medical-waste-management.html>

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If you have any further questions, please contact the CDPH Medical Waste Management Program at (916) 449-5671.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Jean Iacino

Jean Iacino
Interim Deputy Director
Center for Health Care Quality

Attachment



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Ebola Virus Disease
Medical Waste Management – Interim Guidelines

This California Department of Public Health (CDPH) document provides both general guidance for Ebola medical waste management based on federal guidelines and standards as well as more specific guidance regarding packaging, labelling and treatment.

CDPH recommends that all healthcare facility Environmental Services personnel and Infection Control staff work together to develop facility-specific protocols for safe handling of Ebola related medical waste.

General Guidance

Ebola medical waste management guidance provided by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/medical-waste-management.html>) should be reviewed closely and checked regularly, including appropriate infection control practices (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations.html>) for the handling and packaging of medical waste.

Packaging for Onsite Treatment

Place waste into a red biohazard bag. Disinfect the waste using CDC guidance, i.e., use a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered hospital disinfectant with a label claim for a non-enveloped virus. Tie off the bag, disinfect the exterior of the bag, and place it into a second red bag. Place into a rigid container with a tight-fitting lid. Transport immediately to a dedicated, locked storage area. *Do not store this waste in an intermediate storage area.*

Do not solidify suction canisters due to aerosolization of the fluids. *Do not use reusable suction canister systems.* Disinfect the outside of the canister. Place the canister into a red bag, disinfect the exterior, then place into a rigid container with a tight-fitting lid.

Sheets, curtains, pillows, and other linens should also be handled as red bag waste.

Disinfect the rigid, secondary containers and the transport cart.

Be aware that a suspected or known case may generate as much as eight 55-gal drums per day.

Labeling for Treatment

For onsite treatment, label the outside of the rigid container as “Infectious Isolation Waste.”

For offsite treatment (see below), label waste as “Infectious Isolation Waste” and “Incineration Only.”

Onsite Treatment

For autoclaving onsite:

- Appropriate infection control measures are necessary prior to handling the waste (see <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/environmental-infection-control-in-hospitals.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations.html>).
- Do not toss or compress red bags and carefully place them in the chamber.
- Place a spore testing ampule into the center of the load.
- Observe the standard treatment time with a minimum of 30 minutes at 250°F.
- Direct efficacy questions to your Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) for medical waste or to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Medical Waste Management Program, (916) 449-5671.

If storage space becomes an issue, hospitals should use other designated, locked and secured locations within the facility. Hospitals shall notify their LEA or CDPH if they require a temporary variance for storage time requirements.

Packaging for Offsite Treatment

If onsite treatment is not available, your facility may package the waste to be transported to an incinerator. Autoclave efficacy testing has not been completed on triple packaging required by the federal Department of Transportation (http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/pv_obj_cache/pv_obj_id_E7AFD0A1C5DBDDE54BCAAA0A80F9D6898FF50400/filename/suspected_ebola_patient_packaging_guidance_final.pdf)

Therefore, the waste must be incinerated. California sends its incinerable waste to Alabama, Maryland, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Utah, and Texas.

Additional information will be provided by CDPH as it becomes available.