

## Section 1: Understand procedures for handling routine and non-routine waste

**Routine waste** is that which may be produced by a household (domestic) or a business which does not deal with hazardous waste. However, occasionally there could be a risk of infection from routine waste where hazardous materials have been mixed into it or following a period of time when waste becomes hazardous.

The actions you should take when dealing with the risk of infection includes:

- use appropriate PPE
- isolate the area
- report the risk initially to your supervisor or designated person and if requested, to the Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency and RIDDOR.
- use correct procedures/processes for particular types of risk.

### Types of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment or PPE is used when handling waste in order to protect you against exposure to hazardous waste and also to prevent the risk or injury, harm or an accident.

PPE includes the following items which your employer should provide:

- overalls
- protective headwear/hard hats
- safety glasses/goggles
- face masks
- gloves
- safety boots
- respiratory protection (where appropriate)
- ear defenders.

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 define PPE as 'all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather), which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects them against one or more risks to his health or safety'.

Employers have a duty under these regulations and also under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to provide PPE if required. Employees have a duty to wear all PPE provided by employers, to not tamper with any PPE, and use in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and organisational policies and procedures.

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**Knowledge Activity 6:** If you have been provided with PPE at work, list what your employer requires you to use and explain how it protects you and/or others from the risk of injury, accident or harm.




You can prepare yourself prior to handling routine and non-routine waste by ensuring that you:

- assess whether PPE is required
- wear appropriate PPE
- report any concerns or issues to your employer, manager or health and safety representative.

You can prepare your work area prior to handling routine and non-routine waste by ensuring that you:

- assess the safety of the area
- identify any issues from the person who previously used the work area that you should be aware of
- report any concerns or issues to your employer, manager or health and safety representative.



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## Segregating waste

Segregation of waste means to **separate waste** into various types and ensure that:

- the risk of infection is prevented
- to ensure that waste is collected correctly
- to meet Government targets and fulfil social responsibilities for recycling
- in order to comply with legislation and regulations
- to ensure that confidential waste is stored correctly before disposal for data protection and security.

Waste can be segregated in hazardous and non-hazardous waste, recyclable materials and often there will be signs or notices for what type of waste can be into particular containers – paper, metals, plastics etc.

Incorrectly segregated waste can be dangerous and costly to the consumer, the public and the environment. This type of waste may be incorrect if it has been placed in the incorrect container or bag; or if the container /bag has been placed in the wrong area for collection. If incorrect waste is segregated into the wrong types then time must be spent on sorting through it as harm may be caused. For example, if sharps are put into a paper collection bin, then there is a risk that a person may accidentally cut themselves with that sharp. In some cases, if the sharp has contaminated blood or fluid on it then there is a risk of the transfer of infection.

It is therefore important to report instances of incorrectly segregated waste to the relevant authority but also to remind the person who has disposed of the waste how to ensure it is correctly segregated. An example of this would be a household who have not recycled the right materials into their coloured bins. You could report this to the council but also post a reminder notice for the householder as to what the colours mean for different types of waste.

Ensure you understand the policy at your site and whether there is any numbering or tagged process in place.



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**Knowledge Activity 7:** What is the system at your site and why is it important?



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## Non-routine waste procedures

Non-routine waste is that which requires special methods of collection and disposal but is not hazardous and waste which is hazardous (sharps, microbiological waste, chemicals, medications, blood etc.).

It is important to mark, label and record non-routine waste so that:

- non-routine waste can be tracked and audited. If need be, then those responsible for the waste can be held accountable if the waste is harmful and causes harm
- correct segregation of waste can be easily identified and disposed of in the correct manner
- confidential information can be made secure and disposed of correctly
- cross-infection is prevented
- legislation is complied with for particular waste types such as asbestos waste or food waste etc.).

**Knowledge Activity 8:** List the ways in which you are asked to segregate waste in your workplace and identify the risks which this waste poses if not correctly segregated.



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## Dealing with sharps

Sharps obviously provide a risk to those dealing with and handling waste. The correct procedures for disposing of sharps are set and agreed under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), 2002. Under health and safety legislation, employers have a duty to provide a safe working environment and a responsibility to ensure that all staff who may be exposed to sharps have had appropriate training in the safe use and disposal of 'sharps' and are aware of any safety devices which are available for their use.

The correct procedures for disposing of sharps will include:

- protective clothing must be worn as required, i.e. gloves, aprons, eye protection when disposing of sharps
- never force sharps into a container as this poses a risk of damage to the sharp which could lead to accidental injury to the individual or others
- sharps must be placed in a sharps container (conforming to UN 3291 and BS 7320 standards). These are yellow in colour and should always be placed at bench-top height or held in a wall bracket
- used sharps must never be decanted from one container into another. If a sharps container is found to be incorrectly assembled or overfilled, the whole container should be placed inside a larger sharps container and the lid of the larger container then assembled and locked
- when the sharps container is full it must be closed and locked, and the container stored in a secure locked storage area away from public access awaiting removal by the contractor who is authorised to collect and dispose of the contents
- full sharps containers should be signed and dated and labelled with the site from which they originate
- sharps containers should be carried by the attached handle and held away from the body
- sharps must not be placed inside yellow clinical waste bags for disposal as this is dangerous
- sharps containers must be collected by a registered waste contractor and taken for incineration.

