

Infectious Waste Guidelines for SC Members

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Infectious Waste Section has begun to perform audits of the potential infectious waste disposal records of larger dental practices in the state. You should be able to produce records of the last 12 months.

The last changes in the small quantity generator's protocol were over a year ago and an article in the SCDA Bulletin gave the following information:

- There are no fees for small quantity generators (less than 50 pounds per month).
- Each dentist is expected to keep a monthly log of estimated weight of infectious materials generated, based on the model included in the SCDHEC form noted below.
NOTE AT THE TOP OF ALL RECORDS AND ON ALL FORMS THAT POTENTIAL INFECTION WASTE IS TREATED TO RENDER THE SUBSTANCE SOLID WASTE BEFORE DISPOSAL.
- Remember gauze and paper goods would have to be "super saturated" where liquid will run when squeezed before this would be classified as medical waste.
- Materials should be disinfected and dispose as solid waste.
- For sharps, once the container is full, weigh and document on the log the weight before disposing. Note to weigh prior to disinfection so the weight is not affected.
- Disinfect the container and solidify the contents by using plaster, cement or some other substance which is made available by dental supply companies.
- Strike through the biohazard label and mark the container in a sequential numbering system you started in 1991 -- or when you opened your office.
- Note the method of disinfection, give the name of the dentist and double bag in non-biohazard bags and dispose as solid waste.
- Assign one person in the office to keep the log up to date on a monthly basis.

The new renewal schedule is every three years, as opposed to the previous five. Please click on <http://www.scdhec.net/administration/library/D-1999.pdf> to link to the DHEC Infectious Waste Website which provides the necessary Small Quantity Generator form.

DHEC notes, "All small quantity generators must treat sharps containers prior to sanitary landfill disposition as indicated under the new Bill H3978 which was signed by the Governor on July 20, 2002."

If a dentist office goes over the 50 pound limit on potential infectious waste in a calendar month, DHEC notes, the generator must notify the DHEC in writing, manage infectious waste pursuant to the entire regulations, and pay the annual fee as outlined in the Environmental Protection Fees.