

My No: PA/E&OH/HCW/1/2006
Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition,
"Suwasiripaya",
Colombo 10.
21 March, 2006

All,
Provincial Secretaries of Health,
Provincial Directors of Health Services, Deputy Provincial Directors of Health Services,
Directors of Teaching Hospitals,
Heads of Decentralized Units/ Specialized Campaigns,
Heads of Institutions,

National Colour Code for the Segregation of Hospital Waste

Health Care Waste Management has been identified as one of the important aspects in infectious disease control. However, it has been observed that sufficient attention has not been paid for the management of healthcare waste by the healthcare facilities in Sri Lanka.

Between 75%-90% of the waste generated in healthcare facilities are 'non-risk' or 'general' waste. These wastes come from administrative and housekeeping functions of the health care facility. The remaining 10-25% of health care waste is considered as Hazardous because of their infectious nature, and may create a variety of health hazards.

Segregation

The key to minimization and effective management of infectious waste is segregation of waste at the point of generation. Appropriate handling, treatment and disposal of segregated waste reduce costs and help to protect public health. Segregation is the sole responsibility of the generator of waste, and should take place as close as possible to the place where the waste is generated.

National Colour Code

Since a uniform system of segregation should be in force throughout the country, the Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition has developed a National Colour Code for Healthcare Waste.

The National Colour Code identifies 7 specific categories – Yellow, Yellow with a red stripe, Black, Green, Red, Blue and Orange. The Ministry intends to promote segregation of waste generated by healthcare facilities according to the following color code. All health care facilities should use bags and bins of colors specified below for segregation of respective types of waste.

1. Infectious waste – Colour to be used for bins and bags - Yellow

Infectious waste could be defined as waste that is suspected to contain pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi in sufficient concentration or quantities to cause disease in susceptible hosts.

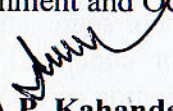
Eg; Cultures or stocks of infectious agents from laboratory work, waste from surgery and autopsies on patients with infectious diseases - such as tissues, material or equipment that have been in contact with blood or other body fluids, clothes heavily soiled with human blood or other body fluids from infected patients - including dialysis equipment such as tubing and filters, disposable towels, gowns, aprons gloves and laboratory coats.

2. **Sharp waste – Colour to be used for bins – Yellow with a red stripe.**
Sharp waste that are contaminated with body fluids are also considered as highly infectious waste
Eg; Sharps, Needles and IV sets.
3. **General waste – Colour to be used for bins and bags - Black**
General waste can be defined as wastes that are non-infectious. These could be considered as general or municipal waste.
Eg; Mixed waste types which are uncontaminated, that could be handed over to the municipal council
4. **Biodegradable waste – Colour to be used for bins and bags – Green**
Biodegradable wastes are the types of waste that decompose naturally.
Eg; Garden waste, kitchen waste and food waste, which are non-infected.
5. **Glass waste – Colour to be used for bins and bags – Red**
Glass waste includes glass bottles and pieces which could be recycled.
Eg; uncontaminated drink bottles, water bottles
6. **Paper waste - Colour to be used for bins and bags – Blue**
Paper waste could be recycled if collected separately.
Eg; Uncontaminated paper, cardboard and office stationary
7. **Plastics waste – Colour to be used for bins and bags – Orange**
Plastic waste could be recycled if collected separately.
Eg; Uncontaminated plastic medicine bottles, saline bottles *without IV sets*, plastic drink bottles, plastic bags

All healthcare facilities should attempt to minimize the generation of infectious waste by segregating the waste according to the above Colour Code. When promoting recycling of paper, glass and plastic waste, special attention should be paid to ensure that these wastes are uncontaminated and non-infectious.

Your immediate attention for follow up action in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

Any clarification in this regard could be obtained from Dr. C.K. Shanmugarajah, Director (Environment and Occupational Health) T.ph/Fax 011-2672004


Dr. H.A.P. Kahandaliyanage
Director General of Health Services

Copies:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition
2. Secretary, Ministry of Environment
3. Secretary, Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government
4. Additional Secretaries, Senior Assistant Secretaries, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition
5. Deputy Director Generals, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition
6. Directors, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition
7. Sri Lanka Medical Association