

## INTRODUCTION TO HANDLING VETERINARY WASTE

This is a practical guide to assist the veterinary profession to comply with waste regulations in England and Wales. The Environment Agency supports this guide.

Further detailed information is available at [www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk) and [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

The BVA also encourages practices to discuss this further with their waste contractor:

## DUTY OF CARE

All businesses have to ensure that:

- All waste is stored and disposed of responsibly
- Waste is only handled or dealt with by those authorised to do so
- Appropriate records are kept of all waste that is transferred or received.

## HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous wastes are those that are harmful to people, the environment or animals, either immediately or over an extended period of time.

Key veterinary hazardous wastes include:

- Cytotoxic and cytostatic pharmaceuticals
- Infectious waste — any veterinary waste containing viable micro-organisms or their toxins which are known or reliably believed to cause disease in man or other living organisms
- All sharps contaminated with pharmaceuticals or animal blood
- Photographic chemicals such as fixer or developer solutions.

All veterinary facilities that produce more than 500 kg of hazardous waste per annum need to register their premises because of the Hazardous Waste Regulations. This can be done on the Environment Agency website or by phoning or writing to them.

All people who move or receive hazardous waste need to record this and maintain a register of each waste involved for their records. Before any hazardous waste leaves the premises a consignment note needs to be completed. Sufficient copies of the note must be prepared to allow the producer, the consignor (if different), all carriers and the

consignee to each have a copy. Consignment notes may be supplied by your waste contractor. They are also available from the Environment Agency in hardcopy for £1.00 or can be electronically downloaded from its website.

These records must be kept for at least three years.

## CLINICAL WASTE

This guide uses *The Controlled Waste Regulations 1992* definition of 'clinical waste'.

'Clinical waste' is any hazardous waste which consists of:

- Animal tissue
- Blood or other body fluids
- Excretions
- Drugs or other pharmaceutical products
- Swabs or dressings
- Syringes, needles or other sharp instruments being waste which **unless rendered safe may prove hazardous** to any person or animal coming into contact with it.

'Clinical waste' includes any waste arising from veterinary practice which may cause infection to any person or animal coming into contact with it.

## NON-HAZARDOUS WASTE

Key veterinary non-hazardous wastes include:

- Any pharmaceuticals other than cytotoxic or cytostatic pharmaceuticals
- Offensive waste — waste that is not 'clinical waste' (as defined above) but which is unpleasant and may cause offence to the senses. Only certain waste types are suitable for placement in this waste stream without stringent and documented assessment procedures.
- Domestic rubbish.

When non-hazardous waste is transferred from one party to another, the person handing it on must complete a transfer note, which both parties must sign and keep a copy. An annual transfer note may be used to cover all the movements of a regular transfer of the same non-hazardous waste between the same parties. These records must be kept for at least three years.