Good practice guide to handling veterinary waste in England and Wales

Veterinary assessment
All general waste must be subject to a veterinary risk assessment which must ask:
- Does the material arise from an animal that has any disease caused by a micro-organism, such that the material is contaminated with that micro-organism?
- Is there any other potential risk of infection?
- If the answer to either is ‘yes’, the waste is infectious, clinical waste

Hazardous waste
Register your premises, keep a Waste Register; use Consignment Notes, keep all records for at least three years.

Cytotoxic and cytostatic pharmaceuticals
- Waste contaminated with cytotoxic and cytostatic pharmaceuticals, which are medicinal products that are toxic, carcinogenic, toxic for reproduction or mutagenic.

This includes:
- Glass bottles and vials
- Clinical waste (for example, swabs, masks and gloves)
- Syringes and sharps
- Animal bedding.

DIPOSAL
- Segregate into appropriate purple and yellow containers — for high-temperature incineration only
- EWC =09 01 01
- EWC =09 01 04 (developer) and 09 01 04 (fixer).

Contaminated sharps
Sharps must be subject to a risk assessment. Sharps contaminated with material (other than cytotoxic or cytostatic) that is deemed to present a risk of infection to any animal or person that may come into contact with it may include:
- Items used in treatment (for example, swabs, masks and gloves, which may include blood-contaminated items)
- Animal bedding
- Blood and body parts.

DIPOSAL
- Segregate into appropriate yellow containers for high-temperature incineration only
- EWC =18 02 02.

Infectious, clinical waste
Waste containing viable micro-organisms or their toxins which are known or reliably believed to cause disease in humans or other living organisms, or waste which, following a veterinary assessment, is deemed to present a risk of infection to any animal or person that may come into contact with it.

This may include:
- Items used in treatment (for example, swabs, masks and gloves, which may include blood-contaminated items)
- Animal bedding
- Blood and body parts.

DIPOSAL
- Segregate into appropriate yellow containers for high-temperature incineration only
- EWC =18 02 02.

Photographic chemicals
This may include:
- Waste fixer and developer solutions.

DIPOSAL
- Segregate into separate fixer and developer leak-proof containers for treatment at an appropriately permitted facility
- EWC =09 01 01 (developer) and 09 01 04 (fixer).

Infectious waste, other than body parts and cadavers, can present a risk of infection to any animal or person that may come into contact with it.

This may include:
- Blood and body parts.
- Animal bedding.
- Animal faeces.

These must not contain body parts or body tissues.

DIPOSAL
- Landfill or other permitted facility
- EWC =18 02 03.

Non-hazardous waste

Offensive waste
- Offensive waste is veterinary waste other than sharps that is not hazardous or clinical but which is unpleasant and may cause offence to the senses.

This waste must have been subjected to a detailed item and patient-specific assessment that clearly demonstrates it does not present a risk of infection or other potential hazard to any animal or person that may come into contact with it, even if mismanaged.

This is particularly important in the case of material contaminated with body fluids (for example, blood), where a veterinary surgeon must be able to demonstrate that they implemented procedures that meet the requirements set out in the accompanying web guidance (see www.bva.co.uk).

As a result of this assessment the veterinary surgeon is declaring that the waste is not hazardous, and is not clinical waste that requires incineration or other treatment prior to landfill.

Offensive waste may include:
- Items used in treatment (for example, swabs, masks and gloves, which may include blood-contaminated items)
- Animal bedding
- Animal faeces

DIPOSAL
- Segregate into appropriate purple and yellow containers — for high-temperature incineration only
- EWC =18 02 02.

Pharmaceuticals (not cytotoxic or cytostatic)
- Waste contaminated with pharmaceuticals (not cytotoxic or cytostatic).

This may include:
- Denatured controlled drugs
- Prescription-only medicines
- Out-of-date drugs
- Contaminated bottles, syringes and packaging:
- EWC =18 02 08

DIPOSAL OF CONTROLLED DRUGS
- All controlled drugs must be denatured or made not readily recoverable and then be disposed of with other pharmaceuticals (not cytotoxic or cytostatic).
- For Schedule 2 controlled drugs this should be done in the presence of an authorised person (for example, a veterinary surgeon from another practice).

DIPOSAL OF OTHER PHARMACEUTICALS
- Segregate into blue waste-proof containers
- Avoid mixing
- Incineration at an appropriately permitted facility
- EWC =18 02 08.

Pet cadavers
Pet cadavers are now transferred and disposed of under animal by-product controls, except where the cadaver is suspected of harbouring a notifiable disease, in which case collection and disposal will be arranged by Defra.

DIPOSAL
- Burial at home
- Burial in a pet cemetery
- Cremation.

Domestic waste
Waste that only contains domestic rubbish. This includes separate recyclable and mixed non-recyclable materials. Batteries and hazardous items should not be placed in the mixed municipal waste.

Recyclables may include:
- Paper, card, unsold newspapers and magazines
- Plastic food containers
- Drink cans
- Batteries.

DIPOSAL
- Recycling or disposal at a suitably permitted or licensed site
- EWC =20 03 01 (mixed).

Further information
It is the right and responsibility of the waste producer, that is, the practice, to classify and segregate their waste. Waste should be subjected to a detailed item and patient specific assessment to determine if it presents a risk of infection or other potential hazard to any animal or person that may come into contact with it.

All businesses have a duty of care 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

This is a practical good practice guide to assist veterinary surgeons to comply with waste regulations in England and Wales.

Supported by the
ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Environment Agency supports this Good practice guide to handling veterinary waste in England and Wales written and published by the British Veterinary Association.

Further information on handling veterinary waste is available at www.bva.co.uk and www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Published December 2011 Copyright © British Veterinary Association. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the publisher. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be made to: BVA, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ Email: bva@bva.co.uk
**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 and 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.

The BVA recommends that veterinary practices secure an assurance in writing that the person collecting the waste is authorised to do so.

**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
- Sharps contaminated with animal blood or pharmaceuticals that are deemed to present a risk of infection
- 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.

**Non-hazardous waste**

Key veterinary non-hazardous wastes include:

- Any pharmaceuticals other than cytotoxic or cytostatic pharmaceuticals.
- Offensive waste — waste that is not hazardous but which is unpleasant and may cause offence to the senses. For all waste placed in this stream the veterinary surgeon must be able to demonstrate that they implemented procedures that meet the requirements set out in the accompanying web guidance (see www.bva.co.uk).
- 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.