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AREA HEALTH SERVICE
NSW HEALTH

Policy Directive

ROYAL PRINCE ALFRED HOSPITAL

WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Note: Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSWAHS) was established on 1 January 2005 with the amalgamation of the former Central Sydney Area Health Service (CSAHS) and the former South Western Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS).

In the interim period between 1 January 2005 and the release of single Area-wide SSWAHS policies (dated after 1 January 2005), the former CSAHS and SWSAHS policies were applicable as follows:-

- SSWAHS Eastern Zone : CSAHS
- SSWAHS Western Zone: SWSAHS

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WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. Introduction

RPAH is committed to maintaining an efficient and cost effective waste management system that protects the health and safety of all employees, patients and other persons working in or visiting the hospital premises. In accordance with NSW government policy and international best practice, the hospital takes a “cradle to the grave” approach to waste management which implies responsibility for waste from point of generation to final disposal. As such, all staff as waste generators have an obligation to dispose of waste responsibly.

RPAH Waste management strategies focus on waste minimisation principles of avoidance, reduction and correct segregation of waste and the promotion of re-use and recycling practices where feasible. Waste management is legislated under the Waste Act (1995) and Waste Regulation (1996) which is administered by the NSW Environmental Protection Authority. The implementation of the RPAH Waste Minimisation and Management Plan in conjunction with this Policy aims to ensure compliance with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements as set out in Section 5 of this policy.

The risks addressed by this policy:

Corporate Risk

The aims / expected outcome of this policy

To provide a framework that ensures all waste at RPAH is managed safely and efficiently with consideration to environmental issues. This policy outlines the overall objectives of the RPAH waste management program and the responsibilities of staff in relation to waste management. Operational details of the RPAH waste management system can be found in the RPAH Waste Minimisation and Management Plan.

2. Principles / Guidelines

Waste Segregation

- Waste is managed throughout the hospital via waste streams that are classified in accordance with the NSW Health Policy Guidelines.
- The hospital provides facilities for the following waste streams: general, clinical, cytotoxic, recyclable, chemical, pharmaceutical, radioactive and hazardous liquid waste.
- It is the responsibility of all employees to dispose of waste into the appropriate waste stream at the point of generation.
- Refer to Section 6. Waste Disposal Procedures for further information

RPAH Waste Management Committee

- It is purpose of the RPAH Waste Management Committee to assist in the implementation and monitoring of waste management activities across the hospital.
- The committee has a membership which is representative of all key areas and departments of the hospital.

Education and Training

- Waste Management training is provided to all new employees through the Hospital Orientation Program, Intern and RMO Orientation programs.
- Waste management information is also provided to agency nursing and sessional medical staff in their orientation handbooks.
- Annual waste management training is available to all hospital departments via the Environmental Services Department.
- Training is also available on request for specific waste management issues and can be arrange through the Environmental Services Department.

Waste Management Strategies

- KPIs for waste management are monitored by the Environmental Services Department and the RPAH Waste Management Committee and used to target waste management and minimisation activities.
- Regular waste segregation audits are carried out for clinical (incl. sharps), general and recycling waste streams and the results of these audits fed back to the appropriate departments for review and action.
- All new equipment should be purchased in accordance with the Area Waste Reduction and Purchasing Plan.
- Disposal of furniture and equipment is managed by the Director of Corporate Services. Disposal of property should first consider the potential for revenue raising within the guidelines provided in the NSW Health Purchasing and Supply Manual.

Waste Handling Containment and Transport

- Waste is separated into the appropriate waste stream at the point of generation by the provision of waste bags and bins appropriate to the types of waste generated.
- Waste is stored in mobile garbage bins which are kept in designated waste rooms located on each floor.
- Waste is collected by Environmental Services Staff and transported on foot by motor tug or by truck to the waste storage area.
- General waste is then emptied into the compactor bin by hydraulic lifter.
- Clinical, Cytotoxic, Sharps and Confidential Paper waste are kept in a secure area in locked bins until collection by the appropriate contractor.

Waste Disposal

- Contracts with the various waste transporters and waste treatment disposal contractor are documented and are consistent with the relevant regulations.
- Disposal of general waste generated by RPA is tracked via weighbridge docket records. Copies of these records are kept and monitored by the Environmental Services Department.
- Disposal of clinical waste generated by RPAH is tracked via a bar coding system and barcode records supplied by the clinical waste contractor are kept and monitored by the Environmental Services Department.

Occupational Health & Safety

- The RPAH waste management system is designed to minimise the potential hazards to employees in managing waste. Employees have an obligation to follow instructions regarding safe work practices.
- All staff involved in the handling of waste are trained in safe work practices that minimise manual handling and infection control risks and are provided with Personal Protective Equipment appropriate to the waste handling task.
- All staff should manage waste spills in accordance with the RPAH spill management policy and relevant spill management procedure.
- All staff are instructed in correct sharps injury protocols.
- All waste management equipment is washed and maintained in accordance with the NSW Health Infection Control Policy.
- RPAH maintains an employee vaccination program for all staff involved in the handling of potentially infectious waste.
- Statistics on manual handling and sharps injuries related to waste handling activities are reported and monitored by the RPAH Peak OH&S Committee and the RPAH Waste Management Committee. Targeted strategies are implemented as necessary to reduce the incidence and severity of these injuries.

3. Performance Measures

Key Performance Indicators are used by the RPAH Waste Committee, RPAH OH&S Committee and the RPAH Environmental Services Department to monitor compliance to Waste Management policy and Guidelines, ensure cost efficiency,

identify and develop targeted waste management strategies and to compare performance with other health care facilities. These include:

- Cost and tonnage trends over time
- Cost and tonnage trends over time by unit or department
- Clinical waste trends vs. hospital activity (tonnes/1000 occupied bed days)
- General waste trends vs. hospital activity (tonnes/1000 occupied bed days)
- Sharps waste trends vs. hospital activity (litres/ 1000 occupied bed days)
- Recycling rates (kilograms per 100 DOHRS FTE)

4. Definitions

- Nil

5. References and links

- NSW Government Waste Minimisation and Management Act 1995 (Waste Act)
- NSW Government Waste Minimisation and Management Regulation 1996 (Waste Regulation)
- NSW Health Waste Management Guidelines for Health Care Facilities – August 1998 (PD 2005_132)
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001
- NSW Health Infection Control Policy (PD 2005-247)
- Australian / New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4478/1997
- Australian / New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 3816
- Gene Technology Act 2000 and Regulation 2001 SR106

6. Procedure – Waste Disposal Guidelines

6.1 Clinical Waste Stream (colour code yellow)

- Definition: Waste which has the potential to cause sharps injury, infection or offence. Sharps are defined as any object capable of inflicting a penetrating injury irrespective of whether it is contaminated with blood or bodily fluids.
- The disposal of clinical waste is separated into two categories sharps and non sharps.

Non Sharp Clinical Waste

- Non sharp clinical waste should be placed into yellow bags with the black clinical waste (biohazard) signage printed on them. Environmental services staff will then place these bags into yellow mobile garbage bins. When full these bins will be locked prior to transport to the holding area on level 2 building 89.
- Non sharps clinical waste includes:
  - any waste **visibly** stained with blood or visibly stained body fluids(incontinence pads or disposable sheets not completely soaked in urine and without faeces may go into general waste)
  - bulk body fluids and blood
  - human tissue (excludes hair, teeth and nails)
  - laboratory specimens and cultures.
  - animal tissues and carcasses.

- Examples of waste commonly found in non sharps clinical waste that should not be there:
  - waste from VRE or MRSA patients that is not visibly stained with blood or body fluids. This waste should go into general waste.
  - sharps of any description
  - gowns and gloves not visibly soiled with blood (including those from VRE and MRSA patients)
  - polystyrene and paper cups
  - reusable linen and towels contaminated with blood and body fluids.
  - Paper

- If you are uncertain please contact the Infection Control Unit for clarification

Sharps Clinical Waste

- Sharps clinical waste should be placed into the sharps containers provided. Most of these containers are reusable and not disposable (therefore do not write or stick anything onto these containers). Continue putting sharps into these containers until they reach the full line or until the tray tips and the full sign shows on the back of the tray. When the tray has tipped into the full position do not attempt to pull the tray back to place another sharp in, as this may propel a contaminated sharp out and cause injury. Once full they should be closed and locked and placed in the dirty utility ready for collection by Environmental services staff. Do not close these containers off

if they are not full as the disposal charge on these bins is per container and so half filled bins incur the same price as full containers.

- Sharps clinical waste includes:
  - Needles
  - small glass ampoules
  - scalpel blades
  - stitch cutters
  - auto lancets
  - trocars
  - wires
  - 8.metal cannula inserts
- Examples of waste commonly found in sharps containers that should not be there:
  - polystyrene cups
  - gloves
  - glass bottles
  - paper towels
  - plastic ampoules
  - IV administration sets
  - syringes (without needles attached)

6.2 Cytotoxic Waste Stream (colour code purple)

- Definition: Material contaminated with residues or preparations containing materials toxic to cells.
- The disposal of cytotoxic waste is separated into two categories sharps and non sharps.

Non Sharp Cytotoxic Waste

- Non sharp cytotoxic waste should be double bagged and placed into clearly labelled purple mobile garbage bins.
- Only staff who have received prior cytotoxic drug/waste handling training should be depositing waste into these bins or transporting these bins.
- These bins should remain locked at all times when not in use Only when these bins are secured/locked and authority given are Environmental services staff to remove them from the area.
- Environmental services staff will then replace these mobile garbage bins on request. They will be transported locked and stored in a holding bay on level 2 building 89 prior to collection by licensed contractor.
- Non sharps cytotoxic waste includes;
  - Leftover or unused cytotoxic drugs
  - IV infusion sets and containers associated with the preparation or administration of cytotoxic drugs.
  - Glass/plastic vials associated with the preparation or administration of cytotoxic drugs.
  - Gowns, caps, gloves and swabs associated with the preparation or administration of cytotoxic drugs.
  - Material used to clean or contain cytotoxic spills.

Sharps Cytotoxic Waste

- Sharps cytotoxic waste should be placed into the purple cytotoxic sharps containers provided. These are disposable containers. Once full or no longer needed the lid should be screwed on and taped down. The container should be placed in the dirty utility for collection by Environmental Services Staff
- Sharps cytotoxic waste includes;
  - Needles that have contained cytotoxic drugs
  - Small glass ampoules that have contained or still contain cytotoxic drugs
  - Any glass containers that have contained cytotoxic drugs

6.3 Hazardous Chemicals, Hazardous Substances & Dangerous Goods Waste Stream- no colour code

- "Hazardous chemical waste" means a substance that to be disposed of and is listed in a document entitled "List of Designated Hazardous Substance" (NOHSC: 10005 (1999)) published by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission.
- "Dangerous Goods" are substances which have the potential to cause a severe single exposure risk such as explosion, fire, poisoning or corrosion. They are classified by the Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods.
- This waste should be stored in the correct containers. A file containing the MSDS sheets should be stored next to this waste.
- This waste is collected from the area it is generated in on a weekly basis.
- A request form needs to be filled in and emailed to janet.harrison@email.cs.nsw.gov.au before 12 pm on a Wednesday for collection by licensed contractor on Thursday afternoon. See policy RPAH PD2008_026 for full details. http://intranet.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/SSWPolicies/pdf/RPA/RPAH_PD2008_026.pdf

6.4 Confidential Paper Recycling- colour code blue (with lockable lid)

- Definition: "Paper that has any identifying personal information"
- Confidential paper must be disposed of directly into secure locked bins in order to comply with the Privacy & Personal Information Act 1998. It should not be placed into general paper recycling.
- The confidential paper recycling bins are blue 240 litre mobile garbage bins with lockable lids (a few different colour lids are around mainly blue, red and yellow) that have slits in the top for disposal. These bins are available on request from Environmental services Department.
- The request form is available on the intranet and needs to be faxed to the number given on the form. These bins should only be filled to ¾ full. Once ¾ full a new request form will need to be faxed through to Environmental Services Dept. (http://intranet.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/RPA/forms/ConfBinRequest.pdf)

- On receipt of the form the full bin will be exchanged for an empty bin. If you do not need another bin then the rapid response team may be paged on #80031 for its removal. In the event that large amounts of confidential waste are being disposed of the bins can be supplied unlocked but will need to be locked immediately after disposal ceases and prior to transport.
- Confidential Waste Paper includes;
  - Patient Health Information
  - Patient Labels
  - Medication Labels
  - Personal Staff Information
- Confidential documents that have been shredded may be placed directly into general paper recycling mobile garbage bins provided they are emptied out of the plastic bags.

6.5 General Paper Recycling- colour code blue

- Definition: Any waste paper that does not contain confidential information, wax or food scraps.
- General paper waste should be placed into the blue cardboard boxes that are labelled “paper only”. These cardboard boxes are emptied by Environmental Services staff into the blue unlocked mobile garbage bins.
- General Paper Recycling includes;
  - Office paper (non-confidential)
  - Cardboard (small amounts e.g. empty glove boxes)
  - Magazines
  - Glossy brochures
  - Envelopes
  - Notepaper
  - Newspapers
  - Used paper towels (unsoiled)
- Staples and paperclips do not need to be removed.

6.6 Mixed/Co-mingled Recycling- colour code Red

- Mixed/Co-mingled waste should be placed into the red cardboard boxes that are labelled “mixed recycling”. These cardboard boxes are emptied by Environmental Services staff into the red mobile garbage bins.
- Mixed Recycling includes;
  - Unbroken Glass Bottles (No Pyrex or Winchester bottles)
  - Aluminium Cans
  - Steel Cans
  - Plastic Bottles with recycling sign 1-7
  - Milk Cartons (empty)
  - Plastic with recycling sign 1-7
- Waste that should not be in mixed recycling bins
  - Pyrex glass
  - Broken glass
  - paper
  - paper cups
  - gloves
  - pizza boxes

- steel cans containing food scraps
- milk container partially filled with milk

6.7 Cardboard Recycling- no colour code

- All cardboard boxes should be flattened by the person who emptied them. The flattened cardboard boxes should then be placed in trolleys provided or in the waste rooms near the general waste bins. These flattened cardboard boxes will be removed by Environmental services staff.

6.8 Battery Recycling- no colour code

- Rechargeable batteries can be recycled. These batteries should be placed in the collection bins outside Biomedical Engineering (Environmental services do not collect these batteries it is up to individual wards/areas to place these batteries in the receptacles provided outside Biomedical Engineering)
- Battery Recycling includes;
  - lead acid
  - nickel cadmium
- Non recyclable batteries (i.e. alkaline) should be placed in general waste bins (there is currently no recycling facility available for these in Australia.)

6.9 Print Cartridge and Toner Recycling- no colour code

- Print cartridge recycling boxes are available on request from Environmental Services. These boxes are lined with plastic bags with special prepaid post address labels. Used print cartridges or photocopy toner cartridges should be placed in these bags. When approximately ½ full the bags should be tied off with cable ties provided. The bags should then be placed outside the mail room level 5 KGV for collection by Australia Post. For departments that do not need their own print cartridge recycling box the cartridges can still be recycled by depositing them in the box outside the mail room level 5, KGV.
- Print Cartridge Recycling includes;
  - Inkjet cartridges
  - Toner bottles
  - Laser cartridges
  - Fuser Kits
  - Drum kits
  - Fax, photocopier and printer cartridges
- It is the department/ward responsibility to take the ½ filled bags to the mail room in KGV.

6.10 Pink Plastic Patient Bag Recycling- no colour code

- Pink plastic patient bag recycling can be arranged on request from Environmental Services Department. Pink plastic patient bags should be placed in plastic bags in receptacle provided. When full the plastic bag should be tied off and replaced and the full bag placed in waste room. Environmental services staff will remove the tied off bag ready for recycling.

6.11 Pallet Wrap Recycling- no colour code

- Pallet wrap recycling can be arranged on request from Environmental Services Department. Pallet wrap should be placed in plastic bags in receptacle provided. When full the plastic bag should be tied off and replaced and the full bag placed in waste room. Environmental services staff will remove the tied off bag ready for recycling.

6.12 Broken Glass

- Broken glass should not be placed in the glass recycling bins this will result in Environmental services staff receiving sharps injuries. Broken glass should be swept up and placed into a small cardboard box and then taped shut, “broken glass” should then be written on the outside of the box and the box placed directly into a general waste mobile garbage bin. Pyrex glass should be disposed of in the same manner.

6.13 Obsolete Equipment

- Obsolete equipment should be removed from the asset register using the intranet form; http://intranet.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/Csahs/Finance/TransferAsset.pdf
- Once removed from the asset register removal will then need to be arranged through the relocation team by faxing them on 57418.
- Obsolete equipment includes;
  - Computers
  - Fax machines
  - Ward equipment

6.14 Furniture

- Furniture can be discarded through the relocation team by faxing a request through to them on 57418.

6.15 Mattresses

- Old mattresses can be discarded by faxing the request through to the relocation team on 57418

6.16 General Waste Stream- colour code green

- Definition; waste which does not fit into the other waste streams mentioned above.
- NB. Most point of disposal general waste bins are white not green but they should have a general waste sticker on them which has green writing and states “GENERAL WASTE”
- General waste includes;
  - food scraps
  - outer plastic packaging (that does not have a recycling sign 1-7)
  - non soiled alcohol wipes
  - disposable gowns not visibly stained with blood (paper & plastic)

- paper masks, disposable (theatre) caps
- gloves not visibly stained with blood
- polystyrene cups
- dead flowers
- plastic sheeting off beds not visibly stained with blood
- incontinence pads or disposable sheets that are not visibly stained with blood or completely soaked in body fluids and/or faeces.

- Waste that should not be in general waste bins
  - office paper
  - confidential paper
  - clinical waste
  - cytotoxic waste
  - computers and furniture
  - cardboard boxes

7. Waste Management Policy – Display Version