Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Environmental Health Code

Chapter 6

Infectious Waste Regulation

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SECTION 1: Authority and Purpose

This chapter is promulgated under the authority of Chapter 70.05 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) to protect public health and the environment, and prevent the spread of any dangerous, contagious, or infectious diseases. The purposes of this chapter are to:

A. Provide broad powers of regulation to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (Health Department) and its appointed health officer, relating to the management of infectious waste.

B. Designate those infectious wastes that are dangerous or potentially dangerous to the public health and environment.

C. Provide the rules necessary to establish an infectious waste management plan.

D. Establish the operation and monitoring requirements for infectious waste generators, transporters, storage, and treatment facilities.

E. Establish and administer a program for permitting infectious waste generators, transporters, storage, and treatment facilities.

F. Provide for surveillance and monitoring of infectious wastes until they are rendered non-infectious and disposed of properly.

SECTION 2: Administration and Applicability

A. The health officer shall administer and enforce these regulations under the authority of Chapter 70.05 RCW.

B. The Tacoma Pierce County Board of Health (BOH) may adopt fees for the administration of these regulations under the authority of RCW 70.05.060(7).

C. This chapter shall apply to all facilities and operations that generate and/or handle infectious waste as those terms are defined in Section 3 of this chapter. This chapter shall not apply to infectious waste generated and lawfully disposed of with residential solid wastes from a single-family residence, except as described in Section 12 of this chapter.

SECTION 3: Definitions

All words used in this chapter shall have their common definition, as used in context, unless a specific definition is set forth herein. The definitions set forth in this chapter shall control, followed by the common definition. The definitions used in this chapter are intended to be used specific to this chapter and should not be used for defining words, terms, or phrases in any other chapter or section of the Environmental Health Code unless specifically indicated otherwise in the text. Additional definitions of general application may be found in Chapter 1 of the Environmental Health Code.

Caretaker Management: The selection by the Health Department of a contractor, firm, or operator to provide infectious waste handling services when the facility's infectious waste permit has been suspended.

Chemical Disinfection: An infectious waste treatment and decontamination method that utilizes appropriately formulated chemical solutions to disinfect infectious waste and contaminated areas.

Container: Any portable device in which materials are stored, transported, treated, disposed of, or otherwise handled.

Collection: The removal and transportation of infectious waste from the generator, transfer station, or pickup station.

Contamination: The transfer of disease-causing organisms from one material or object to another.

Contingency Plan: The document setting forth an organized, planned and coordinated course of action to be followed in the event of a fire, explosion, equipment malfunction or breakdown, or release of infectious waste constituents that could threaten human health or the environment.

Decontamination: The elimination of contamination through cleansing and disinfection of an area, object, or person soiled by contact with infectious waste.

Facility: Any place where infectious waste activity occurs as defined by this chapter.

Gas Vapor Sterilization: An infectious waste treatment technique, only for use under very controlled circumstances, which uses gases or vaporized chemicals as sterilizing agents.

Generator: Any person, by site, whose act or process produces infectious waste as defined in this chapter or whose act first caused an infectious waste to become subject to regulation. In the case where more than one person, e.g., doctors with separate medical practices, are located in the same building, each individual business entity is a separate generator for the purposes of these rules.

- **Class 1-A Generator:** A facility generating under 40 gallons or 50 pounds of infectious waste per month.
- **Class 1-B Generator:** A facility generating between 40 and 100 gallons or 50 and 110 pounds of infectious waste per month.
- **Class 1-C Generator:** A facility generating over 100 gallons or 110 pounds of infectious waste per month.

Handling: Direct physical management of infectious waste.

Incineration: A processing method using an engineered apparatus capable of withstanding heat and having as its purpose the efficient thermal oxidation and/or conversion of combustible material into noncombustible residues (ash) and product gases.

Infectious Agent: A type of microorganism, helminth, or virus that causes, or significantly contributes to the cause of, increased morbidity or mortality of human beings or animals.

Infectious Waste, Biomedical Waste, or Biohazardous Waste: Synonymous terms for untreated solid waste capable of causing an infectious disease via exposure to a pathogenic organism of sufficient virulence and dosage, through a portal of entry in a susceptible host. For the purposes of this chapter, the following types of wastes will be referred to as infectious waste:

- **Animal Waste:** Waste animal carcasses, body parts, body substances, and bedding of animals that are known to be infected with, or that have been inoculated with pathogenic microorganisms infectious to humans.
- **Biosafety Level 4 Disease Waste:** Waste contaminated with blood, excretions, exudates, or secretions from humans or animals which are isolated to protect others from highly communicable infectious diseases that are identified as pathogenic organisms assigned to Biosafety Level 4 by the Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Health, *Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories* (current edition).
- **Cultures and Stocks of Infectious Agents:** Wastes infectious to humans and includes specimen cultures, cultures and stocks of etiologic agents, wastes from the production of biologicals and serums, discarded live and attenuated vaccines, and laboratory waste that has come into contact with cultures and stocks of etiologic agents or blood specimens. Examples include, but are not limited to, culture dishes, blood specimen tubes, specimen containers, slides and cover slips, and devices used to transfer, inoculate, and mix cultures.
- **Human Blood and Blood Products:** Waste human blood, blood products, blood components, and materials containing free-flowing or caked dry blood in amounts capable of being released if compressed or during routine handling. Examples include, but are not limited, whole blood, serum, plasma, blood derived products, and saturated gauze pads.
- **Pathological Waste:** Waste human source biopsy materials, tissues, and anatomical parts that emanate from surgery, obstetrical procedures, and autopsy. “Pathological waste” does not include teeth, human corpses or remains, and anatomical parts that are intended for interment or cremation.
- **Sharps Waste:** All hypodermic needles, syringes with needles attached, solid needles, IV tubing with needles attached, scalpel blades, and lancets that have been removed from their original sterile packages.
- **Miscellaneous Contaminated Items:** Waste items not included in the above definitions that have come into contact with human or animal body substances or other sources which may contain pathogenic organisms of sufficient concentration that exposure to the waste directly or indirectly creates a significant risk of disease transmission. These items shall be determined as infectious waste by and solely at the discretion of the health officer.

Infectious Waste Permit (IWP): The permit issued by the Health Department for the generation, transportation, storage, and/or treatment of infectious waste under the conditions specified in the permit section of this chapter.

- **Class 1-A, 1-B, and 1-C IWP:** The permit required of a generator of infectious waste, unless determined to be exempt in accordance with Section 6 of this chapter.
- **Class 2 IWP:** The permit required of all transporters of infectious waste unless determined to be exempt in accordance with Section 6 of this chapter.

- **Class 3 IWP:** The permit required for the operation of any facility that stores and/or treats infectious waste that is generated on or off-site from the premises owned or operated by the generator, unless determined to be exempt in accordance with Section 6 of this chapter.

Infectious Waste Management Plan (IWMP): A written and implemented system for the safe handling of infectious waste throughout the entire process of generation, segregation, packaging, storage, collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal.

Irradiation: The use of ionizing radiation for the treatment of infectious waste.

Off-site: A facility or area for the storage, treatment, and/or disposal of infectious waste which is not on the generator's site (i.e., "on-site"), or a facility or area which receives infectious waste for storage or treatment, when that waste has not been generated "on-site" at that facility.

Operator: A person who operates a facility or part of a facility.

Owner: A person who owns a facility or part of a facility.

Pathogen: A biological agent that causes disease.

Person: An individual, trust, firm, joint stock company, corporation, partnership, association, state, county, commission, political subdivision of a state, an interstate body, or the federal government or an agency of the federal government.

Personnel: All persons who work at or oversee the operations of a facility involved in infectious waste activity.

Residential Sharps: Those sharps generated and prepared for disposal at a structure designed and used solely for the purpose of a domicile by a single person or family.

Sharps Waste Container: A leak-proof, rigid, puncture-resistant container that is tightly lidded to prevent the loss of contents. The container must have fluorescent red or orange red labels with the biohazard symbol and the word “biohazard” in contrasting color.

Steam Sterilization: A treatment method for infectious waste, utilizing saturated steam within a pressure vessel (known as a steam sterilizer, autoclave, or retort), at time lengths and temperatures sufficient to kill infectious agents within the waste.

Storage: The containment of infectious waste prior to treatment, in accordance with the standards outlined in this chapter, in such a manner as not to constitute disposal of infectious waste.

Storage Facility: A facility authorized and permitted to store infectious waste.

Transporter: A person engaged in the off-site transportation of infectious waste by air, rail, highway, or water.

Treatment: Any method, technique, or process designed to change the biological character or composition of infectious waste to render it non-infectious.

Treatment Facility: Any facility approved and permitted by the Health Department for the treatment of infectious waste.

Vehicle: Every device capable of transporting infectious waste on a public highway. The term "vehicle" does not include devices moved by human or animal power or used exclusively on stationary rails or tracks.

SECTION 4: Types of Infectious Waste Generators

Generators of infectious waste include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. General acute care hospitals

B. Skilled nursing care facilities or convalescent hospitals

C. Health maintenance organizations

D. Acute psychiatric facilities

E. Intermediate care facilities

F. In-patient medical, surgical, or treatment facilities

G. In-patient care facilities for the developmentally disabled

H. Out-patient medical, surgical, or treatment care facilities

I. Physicians offices

J. Medical building

K. Dental offices

L. Animal experimentation units

M. Community clinics

N. Employee clinics

O. Dialysis clinics

P. Blood banks

Q. Plasma centers

R. Commercial diagnostic laboratories

S. Medical, research, industrial, and educational laboratories

T. Home health agencies

U. Hospice agencies

V. Residential congregate care facilities

W. Funeral homes and mortuaries

X. Tattoo/Piercing establishments

Y. Acupuncture establishments

Z. Veterinary clinics

AA. Cleaning services used for infectious/biohazard waste cleanup

SECTION 5: Infectious Waste Permit Requirements

A. An infectious waste permit is required for all generators, transporters, and on/off site storage and/or treatment facilities, as defined above in Section 3, unless otherwise exempted in this chapter.

B. Any person intending to own or operate a facility or transport infectious waste must apply for an IWP from the Health Department. An application shall not be complete until the application has been signed by the owner/operator and all requested information has been received by the Health Department. After the Health Department has evaluated all pertinent information, it shall issue an IWP or provide a written explanation as to why an IWP will not be issued. Applications shall be approved or disapproved within 90 days after receipt of a complete application or the applicant shall be informed as to the status of the application. The permit application shall include the following information submitted on a form available from the Health Department for each IWP Classification:

1. A general description of the facility or operation, including name, mailing address, and location of the facility or area served, if a transporter;

2. The address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for implementing infectious waste management policies and procedures;

3. The name, address, and telephone number of the owner and operator of the facility or transportation operation;

4. An indication of whether the facility is new or existing;

5. A listing of any other relevant state and local environmental permits;

6. The types and maximum amount of infectious waste generated, transported, stored, and/or treated monthly;

7. An applicable infectious waste management plan as described in Section 8 of this chapter;

8. A statement certifying that the applicant understands and will comply with the applicable requirements of this chapter; and

9. All new, expanded, or altered Class 3 treatment facilities must comply with the State Environmental Policy Act rules, Chapter 197-11 WAC.

C. Applicants shall keep records of all data used to complete a permit application, and any supplemental information submitted, for a period of at least three years from the date the application is submitted to the Health Department.

SECTION 6: Infectious Waste Permit Exemptions

A. The Health Department may, upon request, make a determination of exemption from an IWP for those facilities generating incidental or de minimis quantities of infectious waste. The health officer will make a determination of exemption on a case-by-case basis. Facilities determined to be exempt will not require an IWP, and are subject solely to the requirements of Sections 7.B. through E. of this chapter. If it is determined by complaint or inspection that an exempt facility is not in compliance with the applicable requirements of this chapter, the exempt status of the facility will be revoked. Upon revocation of the exemption the facility will be required to submit an application for an IWP and be subject to all applicable fee and permitting requirements from the date of noncompliance, as determined by the health officer.

B. Class 1-A or 1-B generators who hold a valid IWP and transport only infectious wastes generated at premises owned or operated by the generator are exempt from the additional Class 2 IWP fee and regulatory requirements.

C. Class 1-A or 1-B generators who hold a valid IWP and treat infectious waste generated at premises owned or operated by the generator are exempt from the additional Class 3 IWP fee, but shall be responsible for compliance with those infectious waste treatment requirements provided for in Section 9 of this chapter.

D. Class 3 infectious waste storage and/or treatment facilities that hold a valid IWP and generate or transport infectious waste are exempt from any additional permit fees. Class 3 permitted facilities generating or transporting infectious waste must still comply with those requirements applicable to generators and transporters of infectious waste.

E. If it is determined by complaint or inspection that an exempt generator or facility is not in compliance with the requirements of Sections 6.B. through D. of this chapter, the exempt status of the facility will be revoked. Upon revocation of the exemption the generator or facility will be subject to all applicable fee and permitting requirements from the date of noncompliance, as determined by the Health Department.

SECTION 7: General Requirements for Infectious Waste Management

The requirements of this section shall apply to all generators and/or facilities.

A. Infectious Waste Management Plan (IWMP)

1. Any person who owns or operates a facility that generates and/or handles infectious waste in Pierce County shall operate and abide by a Health Department approved IWMP. Depending on the facility type, the approved IWMP will describe procedures related to infectious waste handling, treatment, transportation, storage, and disposal practices.

B. Infectious Waste Segregation.

1. Infectious waste shall be segregated from other waste at the point of origin in the generating facility and managed by only those persons trained in the safe handling of infectious waste.

2. Infectious waste with multiple hazards (i.e., toxic, radioactive, or other hazardous chemicals) shall be segregated from the general infectious waste stream when additional or alternative treatment is required, or in cases where the wastes are regulated under state or federal authority.

C. Infectious Waste Containment.

1. Infectious waste shall be contained in a manner and at a location which affords protection from unauthorized persons, animals, rain, and wind, and does not provide a breeding place or a food source for insects or rodents.

2. Waste sharps shall be contained for storage, transportation, treatment, and disposal in sharps waste containers.

3. Infectious waste, except for sharps, capable of puncturing or lacerating shall be contained in red or orange colored disposable plastic bags. Plastic bags shall be impervious to moisture and have strength sufficient to preclude ripping, tearing, or bursting under normal conditions of usage and handling. The bags shall be securely tied or taped so as to prevent leakage or expulsion of solid or liquid wastes during storage, handling, or transport.

4. All bagged infectious waste and sharps waste containers shall be placed for storage or handling in disposable or reusable pails, cartons, drums, dumpsters or portable bins. The containment system shall be leak-proof and kept clean and in good repair. The containers may be of any color and shall be conspicuously labeled with the words "Infectious Waste," "Biomedical Waste," or "Biohazardous Waste," or the international biohazard symbol on the lid and sides so as to be readily visible from any lateral direction when the container is upright.

5. Infectious waste contained according to requirements of this section, may share a common in-house transfer cart or portable bin with bagged non-infectious wastes during transportation within a facility to a storage or treatment area.

Common transfer carts used to transport contained infectious and non-infectious wastes shall be conspicuously labeled with the words "Infectious Waste," "Biomedical Waste," or "Biohazardous Waste," or the international biohazard symbol on the sides so as to be readily visible from any lateral direction. In the event of an infectious waste spill within an in-house transfer cart or portable bin containing non-infectious waste, all waste items within the transfer cart shall be considered infectious waste and subject to the infectious waste spill management requirements provided for in Section 10 of this chapter.

6. Reusable pails, drums, dumpsters, or bins used for the containment of infectious waste shall not be used for the containment of non-infectious waste, or for other purposes, without first being decontaminated. Approved methods of decontamination include, but are not limited to, agitation to remove visible soil combined with one of the following procedures:

   a. Exposure to hot water of at least 82º C (180º F) for a minimum of 15 seconds; or

   b. Exposure to a chemical or hospital grade disinfectant effective against HBV, HCV and HIV by rinsing or immersion as directed by manufacturer.

D. Infectious Waste Storage.

1. Designated storage areas for infectious waste shall be segregated from other wastes.

2. Infectious waste storage areas shall be secured as to deny access to unauthorized persons and shall be marked with the international biohazard symbol and wording (wording of warning signs should state “Infectious,” “Biomedical,” or “Biohazardous”). Prominent warning signs shall be located on, or adjacent to, the exterior of entry doors, gates or lids. All warning signs shall be readily legible from a distance of at least 25 feet.

3. Filled infectious waste and sharps waste containers shall be stored at the generating facility for no longer than seven days prior to treatment or collection for treatment.

4. Infectious waste transported from a generating facility shall be treated and rendered non-infectious by the transporter in receipt of the waste within 48 hours of being acquired.

5. Generators exceeding the initial seven-day treatment or collection period and transporters exceeding the 48 hours treatment period shall be required to obtain a permit from the Health Department for a Class 3 storage and treatment facility.

6. Floors located within infectious waste storage areas shall be made of impervious material to prevent saturation of liquid and semi-liquid substances. A perimeter curb is recommended to assist with spill containment within infectious waste storage areas. Infectious waste storage areas shall also be well lighted and ventilated.

7. Infectious waste shall not be placed for storage or transport in a portable mobile trash compactor.

8. Trash chutes shall not be used to transfer infectious waste to storage areas.

E. Additional Infectious Waste Requirements and Standards

1. Infectious waste shall not be disposed of prior to treatment. Additionally, compactors, grinders, or pulverizers shall not be used to process infectious waste until after the waste has been rendered non-infectious. Infectious waste treatment requirements and standards are described in Section 9 of this chapter. Infectious waste rendered non-infectious through an approved treatment method should be disposed of at a permitted solid waste disposal or recycling facility.

2. Persons required to have an infectious waste permit shall have such permits during the active life of the facility unless otherwise determined by the Health Department. A permit may be issued or denied for one or more activities without simultaneously issuing or denying a permit for all activities.

3. All generators of infectious waste shall have an alternative plan in writing to provide for back-up equipment or treatment/transportation service.

SECTION 8: Requirements for Permitted Infectious Waste Generators

A. Infectious Waste Generators (Class 1-A, 1-B and 1-C).

1. Permit required. Any person who owns or operates a facility that generates infectious waste shall have a valid Infectious Waste Permit (IWP).

2. Infectious waste management plan (IWMP). Permitted infectious waste generators shall prepare and abide by an IWMP. The IWMP must be reviewed and approved by the Health Department and include the following:

a. The facility name, address, and Health Department permit number (if available);

b. Assignment of roles and responsibilities of staff responsible for implementation of the IWMP;

c. A definition of infectious waste and description of the type(s) of waste(s) generated at the facility;

d. An estimate, in gallons per month, of the volume of infectious waste generated at the facility;

e. Implementation of training when the IWMP is first developed and instituted; when new employees are hired; and when infectious waste management procedures are changed;

f. Annual infectious waste management training for all employees, staff, housekeeping, and janitorial personnel who are involved in the generation and/or handling of infectious waste. Annual training shall be oriented toward refreshing and maintaining personnel awareness with regard to potential hazards as well as reinforce policies and procedures detailed in the IWMP;

g. An explanation of facility procedures with relation to the segregation, containment, and storage of infectious waste;

h. An explanation of facility procedures with relation to the on-site and/or off-site treatment and/or disposal of infectious waste;

i. A spill management plan as described in Section 10 of this chapter; and

j. An alternative plan to provide for appropriate infectious waste management in the event of equipment breakdown or interruption in treatment/transportation service.

B. Infectious Waste Transporter (Class 2)

1. Permit required. Any person who transports infectious waste in a vehicle shall have a valid Class 2 IWP.

2. Labeling and placard requirements for infectious waste transport vehicles.

a. The access doors to any area holding infectious waste in transport shall have a warning sign legible at a distance of 25 feet that indicates that the cargo is infectious waste.

b. Vehicles transporting infectious waste shall be identified on each side with the name or trademark of the transporter, the Health Department permit number, and conspicuously displayed signs or decals. Vehicle signs or decals shall have the following words: "Infectious," "Biomedical" or “biohazardous waste” or contain the international biohazard symbol and the word "Biohazard." Such identifying labeling shall be readily legible during daylight from a distance of 50 feet.

3. In addition, the following information will be required for Class 2 permit holders.

a. A list of all vehicles and reusable transport containers. The vehicles listed must be registered to the applicant pursuant to a lease or contract and included in the permit holder’s required insurance coverage.

b. Proof, via annual inspection, that all trucks, trailers, semi-trailers, vacuum tanks, cargo tanks, and containers used by the permit holder for transportation of infectious waste on highways are in compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

c. Possession of a permit from the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to transport infectious waste on highways within Washington State.

4. Receipt and transfer of infectious waste to off-site facilities.

a. An infectious waste transporter shall not receive custody of infectious wastes within Pierce County unless the facility is in possession of a valid and appropriate IWP.

b. Infectious waste shall be transported to an off-site facility in a leak-proof, fully enclosed container or vehicle compartment. Transported infectious waste shall not be transported in the same container or vehicle compartment as non-infectious wastes.

c. Infectious waste shall not be stored for more than 48 hours at an off-site location or facility unless the facility has a valid and appropriate Class 3 IWP.

d. Infectious waste shall only be delivered for treatment or disposal to a facility for which there is a valid permit to handle such wastes.

e. Personnel who manually load or unload containers of infectious waste to or from a transport vehicle shall be provided with personal protective equipment by their employer.

f. Surface areas of equipment used to transport infectious waste must be clean and impermeable to liquids. Porous floor coverings shall not be used. Vermin and insects shall be controlled. Surfaces of transport vehicles that have contacted spilled or leaked infectious waste shall be decontaminated using procedures described in Section 7.C.6. of this chapter. Wash down areas where vehicles are decontaminated and/or spills and leaks are cleaned shall have drains that discharge directly, or through a holding tank, to a permitted sanitary sewer system.

5. Under no circumstances shall infectious wastes be compacted prior to or during transport unless wastes have been rendered non-infectious by methods described in Section 9 of this chapter.

6. Any infectious waste being transported or stored after a seven-day storage period must meet those storage requirements provided for in Section 8.C. of this chapter.

7. Record Keeping. Infectious waste transporters shall comply with record-keeping requirements described in Sections 11.A., B., E., and F. of this chapter.

C. Infectious Waste Storage and Treatment Facilities (Class 3).

1. Permit required. Any person who owns or operates a facility for storage or treatment of infectious waste shall have a valid Class 3 IWP.

2. Infectious waste management plan (IWMP). The owner and/or operator of any permitted infectious waste storage and/or treatment facility shall prepare and abide by an IWMP. The IWMP must be reviewed and approved by the Health Department and include the following:

    a. The facility name, facility location, facility owner, mailing address, facility contact person, and telephone number;

    b. A procedure for receiving wastes that ensures infectious waste is handled separately from other waste until treatment is accomplished. The procedure shall also provide for the prevention of unauthorized persons having access to or contact with infectious wastes;

    c. A procedure for unloading and processing infectious wastes that limits the number of persons handling the wastes and minimizes the potential for exposure to employees and the public;

    d. A procedure for decontaminating emptied reusable infectious waste containers, transport vehicles, or facility equipment contaminated with infectious waste (see Section 7. C.6. of this chapter);

    e. A provision for the required use of clean gloves and uniforms, along with other protective clothing, face masks, or eye protection, as appropriate, to provide employees with protection against exposure to infectious waste;

    f. A provision for the decontamination of any person having bodily contact with infectious waste;

    g. A description of the processes to be used for storing and/or treating infectious waste;

    h. A description of the containment and refrigeration systems;

    i. A spill management plan as described in Section 10 of this chapter;

    j. A quantification of the maximum amount of infectious waste to be stored, treated, or disposed of per/month; and

    k. An alternative plan in writing to provide service in the event of equipment breakdown or other interruption in their ability to provide storage and/or treatment service.

3. Temperature controlled storage period. Any infectious waste received by an infectious waste treatment and storage facility after the 7-day storage period at the generating facility shall be treated and rendered non-infectious within 48 hours of receipt. Stored infectious waste not rendered non-infectious within 48 hours must be kept at EITHER temperatures between 1º C and 7º C (34º F to 45º F) for a maximum of 7 days, OR at temperatures below 0º C (32º F) for a maximum of 90 days. A daily temperature log shall be maintained and this record shall be kept for a minimum of three (3) years (see Section 11.D. of this chapter).

SECTION 9: Requirements for Treatment Methods of Infectious Waste

All infectious waste shall be treated or disposed of in accordance with the methods set forth in this section unless otherwise approved by the Health Department.

A. Approved treatment methods for facilities having a Class 1 and 3 IWP include incineration, steam sterilization, and Health Department-approved alternative treatment methods.

B. Steam sterilization/autoclave operating procedures shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Adoption of standard written operating procedures for each steam sterilizer including time, temperature, pressure, type of waste, type of container(s), closure on container(s), pattern of loading, water content, and maximum load quantity;

2. Check of recording and/or indicating thermometers during each complete cycle to ensure the attainment of temperature and time duration sufficient to achieve sterilization of the entire load;

3. Use of heat sensitive tape, strips, or other device for each container to indicate that the container has been autoclaved;

4. Use of a biological indicator placed at the center of a representative load processed under standard operating conditions, at least monthly for Class 1-A and 1-B generators and at least weekly for Class 1-C generators and Class 3 treatment facilities, to confirm the attainment of adequate sterilization conditions;

5. Spore tests shall be verified by a third-party certified laboratory at least once per quarter; and

6. Maintenance of records and procedures specified in items 1, 2, 4, and 5 above for a period of not less than three years.

C. Incineration operating standards shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Infectious waste incinerators shall maintain all necessary permits and be in compliance with the standards of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency;

2. Infectious waste incinerators should be multi-chambered and designed to provide complete combustion for the type of waste introduced into the incinerator;

3. All non-metal and glass waste shall be converted by the incineration process into ash or into a form that is not recognizable as to its former character. Any recognizable partially combusted material shall be removed and re-burned until unrecognizable; and

4. Persons required to handle packages of infectious waste shall be provided with clean protective clothing and equipment including overalls, gloves, and eye protection.

D. Infectious wastes identified below shall be treated using the method stated unless an alternative treatment method has been approved by the Department.

1. Sharps waste shall be contained in sharps waste containers and treated by steam sterilization or incineration.

2. Human blood and blood products shall be treated by steam sterilization or incineration. Blood and blood products may also be discharged directly to a sanitary sewer system.

3. Cultures and stocks of infectious agents shall be treated by steam sterilization or incineration.

4. Human pathological waste shall be treated by incineration or may be transferred to a mortician for burial or cremation.

5. Contaminated animal carcasses and parts thereof shall be treated by incineration. Bedding of animals known to be infected with or having been inoculated with pathogenic microorganisms infectious to humans may be chemically decontaminated. Chemical decontamination of contaminated animal bedding may be accomplished by saturating the waste with a hospital grade disinfectant or a 1: 10 solution of 3-5% sodium hypochlorite to water.

6. Substances in liquid or semi-liquid form may be discharged to a sanitary sewer system.

7. Biosafety level 4 disease wastes shall be treated by steam sterilization or incineration.

8. Miscellaneous contaminated items, as defined in Section 3 of this chapter, shall be treated by steam sterilization or incineration.

E. Any person seeking approval of an alternative treatment method for infectious waste must demonstrate to the Health Department that the proposed method is capable of rendering infectious waste non-infectious prior to disposal. Alternative treatment methods include, but are not limited to, chemical disinfection, thermal inactivation, gas/vapor sterilization, and irradiation.

SECTION 10: Requirements for Spill Management of Infectious Waste

The requirements in this section shall apply to all infectious waste facilities that generate, transport or treat infectious waste. Written policies and procedures for spill management of infectious waste of any quantity shall be developed by each facility owner/operator. Infectious waste spill management policies and procedures shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

A. Provisions for spill containment and cleanup equipment available at the facility or immediately available to areas utilized for the collection, storage, transportation, or treatment of infectious waste. Containment and cleanup equipment shall include at least the following items:

1. Disposable absorbent material for spilled liquids;

2. Chemical or hospital grade disinfectant effective against hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and *human immunodeficiency virus* (*HIV*)

3. Red or orange plastic infectious waste bags;

4. Personal protective equipment that meets Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) / Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA);

5. Protective eye wear; and

6. Janitorial equipment, (i.e. dust pans, mops, brooms, etc.) This equipment must be capable of being decontaminated or shall be disposed of as infectious waste.

B. Provisions for spill containment and cleanup procedures. Following a spill of infectious waste, or its discovery, the following minimum procedures shall be implemented:

1. The cleanup personnel will don the appropriate protective clothing and gear, and secure the spill area;

2. Apply absorbent material to the spill and apply disinfectant to contaminated items and the area;

3. Place spilled items inside infectious waste bags and secure them;

4. Clean and disinfect non-disposable items;

5. Remove cleanup clothing and gear and place disposable items inside infectious waste bags and secure them;

6. Replenish used items; and

7. Practice good personal hygiene by washing hands or showering after spill cleanup.

C. Infectious waste spill reporting. Infectious waste spills of more than 1 liter of fluids or 32 gallons of solids from a point of storage, treatment, transportation must be reported to the Health Department. All reportable spills must be documented by the generator, transporter, storage facility, or treatment facility, and reported within the first business day after the reportable spill. Infectious waste spills within Pierce County shall be reported to the Health Department at (253) 798-6047 or other contact number as may be provided by the Health Department. Records of spills must be kept for a minimum of three years.

SECTION 11: Record Keeping

Permitted infectious waste facilities are required to maintain the below listed records for a minimum of three (3) years:

A. Infectious waste employee training logs for new employees and staff annual training with names and positions of participants;

B. Infectious waste spill logs (see Section 10 of this chapter for reporting requirements);

C. Analytical records for infectious waste treatment (i.e., spore test data; autoclave records including treatment, calibration, maintenance, etc.). See Section 9 for testing requirements if applicable;

D. Daily temperature logs for refrigerated or frozen infectious waste (if applicable);

E. All correspondence related to infectious waste management (permit application, notification of alternative treatment method, etc); and

F. Infectious waste transporter receipts, bills of lading, manifests or similar documentation.

SECTION 12: Residential Sharps Waste

The requirements of this section apply to residential sharps as defined in Section 3 of this chapter.

A. Residential sharps waste shall not be disposed of in refuse collection containers (i.e., trash cans or dumpsters) when a solid waste collection company or utility servicing the area provides a source-separated collection service specifically for residential sharps. Providers of source-separated residential sharps collection service shall comply with the standards of 70.95K RCW and the Class 2 transporter requirements of this chapter.

B. Residential sharps waste shall meet the following standards prior to being disposed of in refuse collection containers:

1. Sharps waste shall be placed in puncture-resistant container (i.e., a container or device specifically designed and sold to safely contain residential sharps, or a rigid plastic container sufficiently puncture-resistant to contain residential sharps [such as a plastic detergent container]);

2. Sharps waste containers shall be labeled with the international biohazard symbol or have the words "Infectious Waste", "Biomedical Waste", or "Biohazardous Waste" on the container and be readily visible; and

3. Residential sharps waste containers, other than containers or devices specifically designed and sold to safely contain residential sharps, shall have taped and tightly sealed lids and be marked “Do Not Recycle” in a manner that is readily visible.

SECTION 13: Inspections

A. The health officer shall perform regular inspections of all permitted infectious waste facilities. Findings shall be noted and kept on file. A copy of the inspection report shall be furnished to the operator, owner, or a designated representative of the facility or transporter.

B. Any duly authorized representative of the Health Department may enter and inspect any property, premise, or place at any reasonable time for the purpose of determining compliance with this chapter.

SECTION 14: Enforcement

A. A notice of violation and order to correct shall be issued, as provided in Chapter 1, to any person who violates or fails to comply with the requirements of this chapter.

B. After a notice of violation and order to correct is duly issued, if the person to whom such notice is directed fails, neglects, or refuses to obey such order, the health officer may pursue any of the remedies and penalties set forth in Chapter 1.

SECTION 15: Appeals

Any person aggrieved by a decision or final order of the health officer shall have the right to appeal such decision or order in accordance with the appeal procedures set forth in Chapter 1.

SECTION 16: Waiver

All waivers and variances of these infectious waste regulations shall meet the requirements of Chapter 1 of the Environmental Health Code

SECTION 17: Severability

If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this chapter should be held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity of constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this chapter.