

# Minimizing Regulated Medical Waste

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## Take Home Message

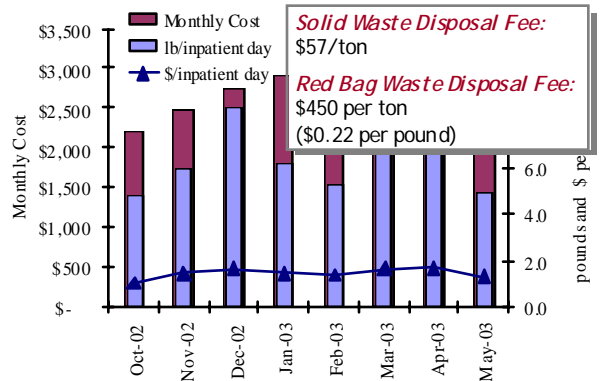
1. While we're talking about RMW minimization, NEVER compromise safety and compliance.
2. Focus on what you can control.
3. Measure - let the numbers talk for you!

## Regulated Medical Waste (RMW)

- "Red Bag" - What's the Problem?
- Defining RMW and What Goes in the Red Bag
- P2 Strategies for Safely Reducing Red Bag Waste



## Red Bag Waste PIMC Case Study



## Infectious Waste - What are we talking about?

- Infectious waste is defined in Hawaii Department of Health Title 11, Chapter 104 as:

- ✓ Infectious isolation waste
- ✓ Cultures and stocks of infectious agents
- ✓ Blood, blood products, and body fluids
- ✓ Pathological wastes
- ✓ Contaminated sharps
- ✓ Contaminated animal carcasses, body parts, and bedding



<http://www.hawaii.gov/health/about/rules/11-104.pdf>

## Infectious Waste - What it is...

- **Infectious isolation waste**  
*Biological waste and discarded material contaminated with blood, body fluids (etc...) from patients with communicable diseases requiring isolation.*
- **Cultures and stocks from infectious agents** *from medical, clinical, pathological labs and other associated sources (including devices and glassware).*

<http://www.hawaii.gov/health/about/rules/11-104.pdf>

## Infectious Waste - What it is...

- **Pathological wastes**  
*All human tissues, organs, and body parts that are removed during surgery, and other medical or diagnostic procedures.*
- **Contaminated animal carcasses, body parts, and bedding**  
*Body parts, tissues, and bedding of animals that have been, or are believed to have been intentionally exposed to pathogens infectious to humans.*

<http://www.hawaii.gov/health/about/rules/11-104.pdf>

## Infectious Waste - What it is...

- **Blood, blood products, and body fluid** *means all waste blood and blood products such as serum, plasma, and other blood components, and all body fluids.*

### Body fluids are...

- Semen
- Vaginal secretions
- Cerebrospinal
- Synovial
- Pleural
- Peritoneal
- Amniotic fluid

### Body fluids are NOT...

- Nasal secretions
- Sputum
- Tears
- Urine
- Vomitus

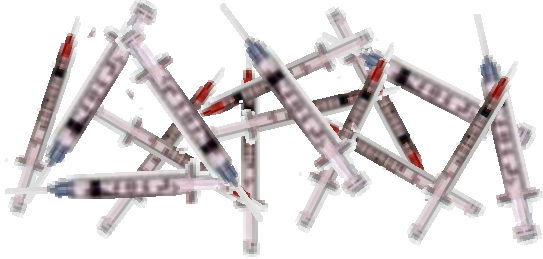
*...unless they contain visible blood*

<http://www.hawaii.gov/health/about/rules/11-104.pdf>

## Infectious Waste - What it is...

- **Sharps**

*Syringes, needles, blades, scalpels, lancets, broken glass and any other contaminated sharp object.*



<http://www.hawaii.gov/health/about/rules/11-104.pdf>

## So what goes in the Red Bag?



## So what should go in the Red Bag?

- Most infectious waste streams **DO NOT** go in red bag
- Items that do are generally derived from this category:

*Blood and body fluid contaminated items that are "saturated or dripping" and "those caked with dried blood or dried body fluids."*

## ... and what should not!

Unless visibly soiled with blood, these items do not belong in red bag trash:

- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ Bed Pans                  | ✓ Vent tubing              |
| ✓ Empty specimen containers | ✓ Emesis basins            |
| ✓ Dressings and gauze       | ✓ Urinals                  |
| ✓ Diapers/Incontinence Pads | ✓ Paper towels             |
| ✓ Splints                   | ✓ IV bags                  |
| ✓ Masks, gowns, gloves      | ✓ Casts and splints        |
| ✓ Tapes                     | ✓ Packaging materials      |
| ✓ Cotton                    | ✓ Foley bags and catheters |
| ✓ Suction tubing            | ✓ Alcohol preps            |

## Red Bag Waste Reduction Strategies

1. Location, location, location!
2. Training and Education
3. Source reduction opportunities:
  - BioElite Red Bags
  - Reusable Sharps Containers



## Strategy 1: Location, Location, Location!



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- Container location is the most important factor in properly segregating waste
- Consider only having red bags near nurse's stations
- DO NOT place in areas of high solid waste generation
- What have your facilities done?

## Strategy 2: Training and Education



## Strategy 2: Training - What Can You Do?

- Waste assessments
- Outreach materials
- Formal training programs

**REMEMBER:**  
Compliance and safety first  
Focus on what you can control

## Strategy 2: Training and Education



## Strategy 2: Training and Education

# SAMPLE QUIZ

## Where to throw? *IV Bags*



- IV bags are not considered red bag wastes

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

**Where to throw?**  
*Diapers and Incontinence Pads*



- Items containing non-infectious body fluids generally not considered red bag waste

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

**Where to throw?**  
*Cups, Plates, and Eating Utensils*



- Used food service items - including cups, plates, and utensils - are not considered red bag wastes

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

**Where to throw?**  
*Bandages, Gauze, and Wrap*



- "Soiled" vs "Tainted"
- Possibility of reconstitution

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

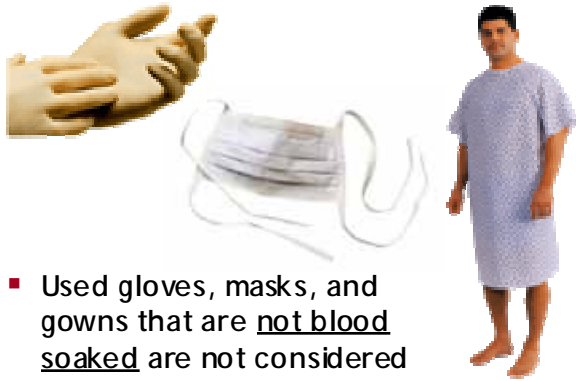
**Where to throw?**  
*Needles, Syringes, Lancets, and Scalpels*



- Syringes, needles, blades, scalpels, lancets, broken glass, and any other contaminated sharp object should be placed in sharps containers

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

**Where to throw?**  
*Gloves, Masks, and Gowns*



- Used gloves, masks, and gowns that are not blood soaked are not considered red bag waste

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

**Where to throw?**  
*Hand Towels and Face Tissue*



- Used paper towels and tissue are not considered red bag waste

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

**Where to throw?**  
*Blood and Body Fluids*



- Blood containing items capable of being poured or spilled and other items visibly soiled with blood are considered red bag wastes

*Red Bag Waste Quiz*

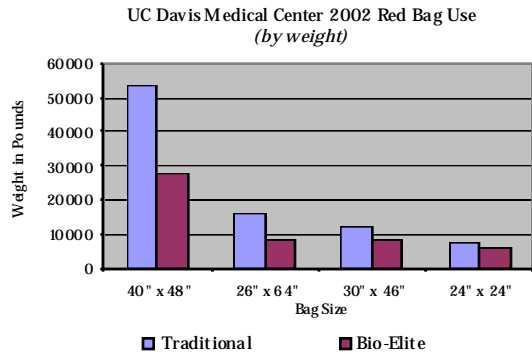
**Strategy 3: Source Reduction Opportunities - BioElite Red Bags**

**Bio-Elite red bags:**

- Are stronger ...
  - Surpasses the ASTM 165 gram dropped dart test at 180 grams
  - Uses a star seal for leak protection
- Weigh 32% less than conventional LDPE bags
- Made with 30% recycled plastic
- Cost less



### Strategy 3: BioElite Red Bags



### Strategy 3: BioElite Red Bags



### Strategy 3: Reusable Sharps Containers

#### Reusable Sharps Containers

- Containers are taken to a permitted medical waste transfer station or off-site treatment facility for processing
- Opened by a robotic mechanism (or other approved practice) and emptied for processing as medical waste
- Reusable sharps container is washed and sanitized before being returned to the hospital for reuse



### Reusable Sharps Containers: Does It Really Add Up?

- Typical 3-gallon sharps container weighs about 3 pounds.
- Changed once a week in each patient room:
  - ✓ 100 rooms = 5200/year
  - ✓ 150 rooms = 7800/year
  - ✓ 200 rooms = 10,400/year

Save 8 to 15 tons per year!



### Reusable Sharps Containers: Implementation Considerations

- Limited service providers on the Islands
- "New Container" transition period  
*(slightly different shape, size, function)*
- Reliant on vendor to empty containers

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