

SAMPLE PHARMACY POLICY

for Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste

I. Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste

Policy: The pharmacy will comply with federal and state regulations regarding the handling and disposal of drugs and products.

A. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

1. RCRA addresses drugs and chemicals that have been designated as:
 - a. Toxic substances
 - b. Flammable substances
 - c. Oxidizing agents
 - d. Explosive
 - e. Corrosive

B. Inventory management and distribution

1. Pharmacy
 - a. RCRA requires special procedures for handling waste of products that meet the designations listed above.
 - b. The pharmacy will identify products that meet the criteria for special handling of waste and clearly mark the stock locations in the pharmacy indicating that special disposal procedures are required.
 - c. When these products are dispensed they will have a label affixed denoting that special disposal is required.
2. Nursing
 - a. Nursing staff will receive education regarding the principles of RCRA and the procedure for handling the unused portion of medications that meet the criteria for special disposal.
 - b. The unused portion of any medication that bears a special handling label must be returned to the pharmacy for disposal.
 - c. Empty packaging, syringes, vials, etc that contained these products are not considered to be waste and they are not affected by these hazardous waste rules.
 - d. Medications that are dispensed for home use are exempt from these disposal rules. Any special disposal labels that are affixed to a medication/container should be removed before it is dispensed to a patient.

C. Disposal

1. When unused medications that bear a special handling label are returned to the pharmacy they will be evaluated for disposition:
 - a. Any intact, unused medication that has not reached its expiration date and is still in the original packaging may be returned to stock in the same manner as other drug products.
 - b. Medications that have reached their expiration date but are intact and in their original packaging may be handled as any other outdated medication.
 - c. Partial medications, regardless of expiration status, must be placed in special disposal bins in the pharmacy for subsequent removal according to federal and state regulations.