

NIH POLICY MANUAL

3032 - WASTE MINIMIZATION AND MANAGEMENT AT NIH

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1. **Explanation of Material Transmitted:** This chapter is being revised to reflect the move of the Environmental Protection Branch from the Division of Safety, Office of Research Services (ORS) to become the Division of Environmental Protection within the Office of Research Facilities Development and Operations (ORF), Office of the Director (OD). Revisions also reflect reorganization of other NIH components associated with waste management and changes in laws, regulations and executive orders that have occurred since the previous issuance.

2. **Filing Instructions:**

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A. Purpose:

This chapter establishes the policy for management of all types of wastes generated at NIH facilities including general solid, medical pathological, radioactive, chemical, mixed and multihazardous wastes, and wastewater. Asbestos is considered a controlled waste and is not covered by this document. The policy requires, where feasible, the elimination or reduction of the amounts and toxicity of wastes at their source, and proper management of all unavoidable wastes including their characterization, collection, labeling, packaging, storage, recycling, transportation, treatment and final disposal. It applies to NIH personnel involved with the generation of wastes, waste management and support services.

B. Policies:

1. The NIH shall follow the national policy declared by the Congress of the United States in the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 by ensuring that all wastes and pollutants from all of its mission activities are managed in accordance with the hierarchy of methods listed in the Act:

- a. Whenever feasible, pollutants and wastes should be prevented or reduced in their amount and toxicity at the source;
- b. Pollutants and wastes that cannot be prevented should be beneficially reused or recycled in an environmentally safe manner; and
- c. Disposal of pollutants or wastes into the environment should be employed only as a last resort and must be conducted in a manner that is safe, protective of the environment and compliant with all regulatory requirements.

2. NIH shall follow all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, permits and licenses, and executive orders pertaining to waste management, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976;
- b. Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976;
- c. Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980;
- d. Clean Water Act of 1972;
- e. Atomic Energy Act of 1954;
- f. Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1975;

- g. Executive Order 13148, titled “Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management”; and
 - h. Executive Order 13101 titled “Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition.”
3. NIH waste management activities shall be in conformance with the NIH Environmental Policy.

C. Definitions:

1. Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) - discarded materials containing friable or nonfriable asbestos fibers.
2. Chemical Waste – wastes regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or individual states as hazardous waste; and other discarded materials that contain or are contaminated with hazardous chemicals at a concentration which is potentially hazardous to human health or safety.
3. General Solid Waste – solid waste that is not contaminated with or contains hazardous chemicals, radioactive materials or Medical Pathological Waste,
4. Medical Pathological Waste (MPW) - waste with presence of pathogenic agents; human tissues, animal carcasses and tissues from biomedical research; contaminated animal bedding; needles, syringes, scalpels and other sharps; materials with trace contamination of cytotoxic drugs; and other discarded materials that are regulated as medical waste by the U.S. Department of Transportation, state or local laws.
5. Radioactive Waste - any waste that contains or is contaminated with radioactive material.
6. Multihazardous Waste – wastes that meet the definition of more than one of the following types of waste: Chemical, Radioactive or Medical Pathological Waste.
7. Mixed Waste – a Multihazardous Waste that contains Chemical Waste and Radioactive Waste.
8. Wastewater – liquid waste primarily consisting of water that is discharged to the environment through the sanitary sewer, storm water system or other means.

D. Responsibilities:

1. The Office of Research Facilities Development and Operations (ORF), through the Division of Environmental Protection (DEP), has overall responsibility for waste management activities at NIH facilities including:

- a. Assisting Institutes and Centers (ICs) in meeting requirements for affirmative procurement of products and services that maximize environmental performance and minimize generation of wastes;
- b. Development and issuance of technical assistance and guidance to NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs) in managing wastes and complying with related regulatory requirements;
- c. Setting goals and targets for waste reduction as required by, Environmental Management System, executive orders, collecting data and information necessary to track progress in meeting goals and targets, and complying with reporting requirements;
- d. Providing waste management and disposal services necessary to support NIH facilities; and
- e. Serving as the central NIH information repository on management of wastes from biomedical research.

2. The Division of Radiation Safety (DRS), ORS, provides training, technical assistance and health physics services to Institutes and Centers (ICs) on radioactive and mixed waste management, and ensures compliance with Nuclear Regulatory Commission requirements relating to management of radioactive wastes generated at NIH facilities.

3. The Division of Occupational Health and Safety (DOHS), ORS, is responsible for providing technical assistance and support regarding health and safety risks, and appropriate precautions relating to waste management activities. DOHS also prepare standard operating procedures concerning removal of asbestos containing material (ACM) for the use of ORF, ORS and contract personnel.

4. Division of Fire /Rescue Services (DFRS), ORS, is responsible for providing first response to incidents involving waste management operations on the main NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland and at other NIH facilities as directed by the Director, ORS.

5. Employees of the Institutes and Centers (ICs) who may generate any of the wastes as defined in this Chapter are responsible for:

- a. Purchasing and using environmentally preferable products and services in accordance with applicable regulations, executive branch policies and guidance;
- b. Carrying out all NIH mission activities in a manner that minimizes the volume, toxicity and radioactivity of the wastes generated;
- c. Complying with all applicable waste management laws, regulations, executive orders and NIH policies.

d. Properly managing wastes prior to collection, transfer, and recycling or disposal by appropriate components of the DEP or Institutes and Centers (ICs). This includes ensuring proper segregation of wastes; separation of recyclable materials from other wastes and placement into respective collection containers; inactivation of infectious agents; identification; labeling; packaging and storing of the waste.

E. Waste Management Procedures:

Refer to the NIH Waste Disposal Guide for disposal procedures for the following types of waste: Recyclable Materials, General Solid Waste, Medical Pathological Waste, Chemical Waste, Radioactive Waste, and Multihazardous Waste. To obtain a printed copy of the Guide please call DEP at 301-496-7990 or your DOHS Health and Safety Consultant at 301-496-2346. The Guide and updated information is available online at this address: [http://orf.od.nih.gov/Environmental + Protection/Waste + Disposal/](http://orf.od.nih.gov/Environmental+Protection/Waste+Disposal/)

F. Additional Information:

For more information on this chapter, contact:

Division of Environmental Protection, ORF 301-496-3537.

Online Information: <http://orf.od.nih.gov/>

G. Records Retention and Disposal:

For this chapter, records pertaining to NIH Waste Management are retained and disposed of under the authority of NIH Manual [1743](#) "Keeping and Destroying Records," Appendix 1, "NIH Records Control Schedule," Items 1300 B "Safety" and 7000 C, "Environmental Impact" NIH e-mail messages. NIH e-mail messages (messages, including attachments, that are created on NIH computer systems or transmitted over NIH networks) that are evidence of the activities of the agency or have informational value are considered Federal records. These records must be maintained in accordance with current NIH Records Management guidelines. Contact your IC Records Officer for additional information.

All e-mail messages are considered Government property, and, if requested for a legitimate Government purpose, must be provided to the requester. Employees' supervisors, NIH staff conducting official reviews or investigations, and the Office of Inspector General may request access to or copies of the e-mail messages. E-mail messages must also be provided to Congressional oversight committees if requested and are subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. Since most e-mail systems have back-up files that are retained for significant periods of time, e-mail messages and attachments are likely to be retrievable from a back-up file after they have been deleted

from an individual's computer. The back-up files are subject to the same requests as the original messages.

H. Management Controls: The purpose of this manual issuance is to establish the NIH policy for waste minimization and management on the NIH Bethesda campus.

1. Office Responsible for Reviewing Management Controls Relative to this Chapter is the Division of Environmental Protection (DEP), ORF. Through this manual issuance, the DEP is responsible for the methods used to ensure that the management controls are implemented and working.

2. Frequency of Review: Ongoing review.

3. Method of Review: The Division of Environmental Protection, ORF, in coordination with the Division of Radiation Safety, ORS, the Division of Occupational Health and Safety, ORS, the Division of Fire and Rescue Services, ORS, and Institute and Center (ICs) representatives as necessary, will maintain oversight and ensure effective implementation and compliance with this policy through monitoring waste minimization activities on the NIH Bethesda campus.

4. Review Reports are Sent to: Director, ORF. Issues of concern should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Director for Management and the Deputy Director for Intramural Research.