

COVID-19

How Skilled Nursing facilities can optimize costs and safety in COVID-19 Waste Disposal



Waste By Definition.

As defined by the CDC, COVID-19 waste does NOT need “special” handling

COVID-19 waste is classified as regulated medical waste and managed the same as all other RMW. Misconceptions around the handling and disposal of COVID-19 waste can lead to over-categorization of waste, substantial increases in costs, and safety risks posed to downstream service staff.

Poor handling processes or **over-categorization** of COVID-19 waste can have a significant impact on:



Inflated Waste Volumes and negative environmental impact



Cross contamination, hygiene and handling risks



Substantial increase in waste disposal costs

HOW YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR DISPOSAL COSTS AND INFECTION RISK

1 Eliminate overclassification of waste and remove bins from the patient environment

Follow expert medical waste education when it comes to what is and is not RMW (or COVID-19 waste) to ensure that non-medical waste such as uncontaminated PPE or gauze is disposed of in general trash; you control your costs when it comes to segregation. Fill your bins! half-filled bins will incur substantially increased medical waste collection costs. Removing medical waste bins from the patient environment also dissuades against trash being incorrectly disposed of in the medical waste stream.

2 Reduce waste handling and repackaging

Look at how your waste is being handled and moved through your facility. Are there multiple people touching the waste? EVS or clinical staff? Is there a way of reducing the number of times a bag is touched, can a waste bin be mobile and moved in and out of patient areas rather than having bins in patient rooms that need to be decanted each day? If using cardboard boxes that require assembly and manual packaging, is there a reusable solution that can minimize labor and workload that doesn't expose staff to touching contaminated surfaces?

3 Reduce “touches” and infection transfer risk

The more times waste is touched, the higher the exposure rate to unclean surfaces and potential cross-contamination risk. Look for foot-pedal operated medical waste containers or bagless solutions that eliminate surface touch. If using bags, ensure that correct infection control protocols are being used and bags are being tied up correctly to ensure no spillage or risk impact to downstream service staff.



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