

**Chapter 70A.228 RCW
BIOMEDICAL WASTE**

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RCW 70A.228.005 Findings. The legislature finds and declares that:

(1) It is a matter of statewide concern that biomedical waste be handled in a manner that protects the health, safety, and welfare of the public, the environment, and the workers who handle the waste.

(2) Infectious disease transmission has not been identified from improperly disposed biomedical waste, but the potential for such transmission may be present.

(3) A uniform, statewide definition of biomedical waste will simplify compliance with local regulations while preserving local control of biomedical waste management. [1992 c 14 § 1. Formerly RCW 70.95K.005.]

RCW 70A.228.010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Biomedical waste" means, and is limited to, the following types of waste:

(a) "Animal waste" is waste animal carcasses, body parts, and bedding of animals that are known to be infected with, or that have been inoculated with, human pathogenic microorganisms infectious to humans.

(b) "Biosafety level 4 disease waste" is waste contaminated with blood, excretions, exudates, or secretions from humans or animals who 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[s] of health, biosafety in microbiological and biomedical laboratories, current edition.

(c) "Cultures and stocks" are wastes infectious to humans and includes specimen cultures, cultures and stocks of etiologic agents, wastes from 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. Such waste includes but is not limited to culture dishes, blood specimen tubes, and devices used to transfer, inoculate, and mix cultures.

(d) "Human blood and blood products" is discarded waste human blood and blood components, and materials containing free-flowing blood and blood products.

(e) "Pathological waste" is 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, remains, and anatomical parts that are intended for final disposition.

(f) "Sharps waste" is all hypodermic needles, syringes with needles attached, IV tubing with needles attached, scalpel blades, and lancets that have been removed from the original sterile package.

(2) "Local government" means city, town, or county.

(3) "Local health department" means the city, county, city-county, or district public health department.

(4) "Person" means an individual, firm, corporation, association, partnership, consortium, joint venture, commercial entity, state government agency, or local government.

(5) "Treatment" means incineration, sterilization, or other method, technique, or process that changes the character or composition of a biomedical waste so as to minimize the risk of transmitting an infectious disease.

(6) "Residential sharps waste" has the same meaning as "sharps waste" in subsection (1) of this section except that the sharps waste is generated and prepared for disposal at a residence, apartment, dwelling, or other noncommercial habitat.

(7) "Sharps waste container" means a leak-proof, rigid, puncture-resistant red container that is taped closed or tightly lidded to prevent the loss of the residential sharps waste.

(8) "Mail programs" means those programs that provide sharps users with a multiple barrier protection kit for the placement of a sharps container and subsequent mailing of the wastes to an approved disposal facility.

(9) "Pharmacy return programs" means those programs where sharps containers are returned by the user to designated return sites located at a pharmacy to be transported by a biomedical or solid waste collection company approved by the utilities and transportation commission.

(10) "Drop-off programs" means those program sites designated by the solid waste planning jurisdiction where sharps users may dispose of their sharps containers.

(11) "Source separation" has the same meaning as in RCW 70A.205.015.

(12) "Unprotected sharps" means residential sharps waste that are not disposed of in a sharps waste container. [2020 c 20 § 1241; 2019 c 432 § 32; 1994 c 165 § 2; 1992 c 14 § 2. Formerly RCW 70.95K.010.]

Effective date—2019 c 432: See note following RCW 68.05.175.

Findings—Purpose—Intent—1994 c 165: "The legislature finds that the improper disposal and labeling of sharps waste from residences poses a potential health risk and perceived threat to the waste generators, public, and workers in the waste and recycling industry. The legislature further finds that a uniform method for handling sharps waste generated at residences will reduce confusion and injuries, and enhance public and waste worker confidence.

It is the purpose and intent of this act that residential generated sharps waste be contained in easily identified containers and separated from the regular solid waste stream to ensure worker safety and promote proper disposal of these wastes in a manner that is environmentally safe and economically sound." [1994 c 165 § 1.]

RCW 70A.228.020 State definition preempts local definitions.

The definition of biomedical waste set forth in RCW 70A.228.010 shall be the sole state definition for biomedical waste within the state, and shall preempt biomedical waste definitions established by a local health department or local government. [2020 c 20 § 1242; 1992 c 14 § 3. Formerly RCW 70.95K.011.]

RCW 70A.228.030 Waste treatment technologies.

(1) At the request of an applicant, the department of health, in consultation with the department of ecology and local health departments, may evaluate the environmental and public health impacts of biomedical waste treatment technologies. The department shall make available the results of any evaluation to local health departments.

(2) All direct costs associated with the evaluation shall be paid by the applicant to the department of health or to a state or local entity designated by the department of health.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "applicant" means any person representing a biomedical waste treatment technology that seeks an evaluation under subsection (1) of this section.

(4) The department of health may adopt rules to implement this section. [1992 c 14 § 4. Formerly RCW 70.95K.020.]

RCW 70A.228.040 Residential sharps—Disposal—Violation.

(1) A person shall not intentionally place unprotected sharps or a sharps waste container into: (a) Recycling containers provided by a city, county, or solid waste collection company, or any other recycling collection site unless that site is specifically designated by a local health department as a drop-off site for sharps waste containers; or (b) cans, carts, drop boxes, or other containers in which refuse, trash, or solid waste has been placed for collection if a source separated collection service is provided for residential sharps waste.

(2) Local health departments shall enforce this section, primarily through an educational approach regarding proper disposal of residential sharps. On the first and second violation, the health department shall provide a warning to the person that includes information on proper disposal of residential sharps. A subsequent violation shall be a class 3 infraction under chapter 7.80 RCW.

(3) It is not a violation of this section to place a sharps waste container into a household refuse receptacle if the utilities and transportation commission determines that such placement is necessary to reduce the potential for theft of the sharps waste container. [1994 c 165 § 3. Formerly RCW 70.95K.030.]

Effective date—1994 c 165 § 3: "Section 3 of this act shall take effect July 1, 1995." [1994 c 165 § 6.]

Findings—Purpose—Intent—1994 c 165: See note following RCW 70A.228.010.

RCW 70A.228.050 Residential sharps waste collection.

(1) A public or private provider of solid waste collection service may provide a program to collect source separated residential sharps waste containers in conjunction with regular collection services.

(2) A company collecting source separated residential sharps waste containers shall notify the public, in writing, on the availability of this service. Notice shall occur at least forty-five days prior to the provision of this service and shall include the following information: (a) How to properly dispose of residential sharps waste; (b) how to obtain sharps waste containers; (c) the cost of the program; (d) options to home collection of sharps waste; and (e) the legal requirements of residential sharps waste disposal.

(3) A company under the jurisdiction of the utilities and transportation commission may provide the service authorized under subsection (1) of this section only under tariff.

The commission may require companies collecting sharps waste containers to implement practices that will protect the containers from theft. [1994 c 165 § 4. Formerly RCW 70.95K.040.]

Findings—Purpose—Intent—1994 c 165: See note following RCW 70A.228.010.

RCW 70A.228.900 Section headings. Section headings as used in this chapter do not constitute any part of the law. [1992 c 14 § 5. Formerly RCW 70.95K.900.]

RCW 70A.228.901 Effective dates—1992 c 14. (1) Sections 2 and 3 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [March 20, 1992].

(2) Section 4 of this act shall take effect October 1, 1992. [1992 c 14 § 7. Formerly RCW 70.95K.920.]