

Biological Waste Management Procedure

1. Purpose

Inala Community House (ICH) seeks to ensure that the health and safety of all people is maintained when coming into contact with various bodily fluids or substances that may pose a risk of infection to others. This includes both the fluid or substance itself and also any item which comes into contact with it.

This procedure operates pursuant to the ICH Workplace Health and Safety Policy.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, Board members, volunteers, students, trainees and contractors. For the purposes of this procedure, these persons shall be referred to as workers.

3. Definitions

Waste: any biological contaminant or item which has come into contact with a biological contaminant. This can include:

- Blood
- Vomit
- Saliva
- Urine or faeces
- Any items which have come into contact with waste such as clothing, sharps, etc.

4. Procedure

4.1 Transmission of Infection

Infectious agents can be spread through:

- Breathing in airborne pathogens
- Touching contaminated objects or eating contaminated food
- Skin to skin contact or sharing of personal items
- Contact with bodily fluids

4.2 Infection Control

All workers must use appropriate infection control measures when dealing with waste. Effective infection control measures will reduce the risk of transmission of infectious agents. Whereas poor infection control can cause considerable harm and even death.

When dealing with biological waste, the best practice is to assume that everyone is potentially infectious and therefore proper procedures are to be followed at all times.

Infection control involves a risk management process including:

- Identifying of hazards
- Assessing the risk to workers, clients and other people
- Controlling hazards as far as reasonably practicable
- Review of risks and control measures

General infection control measures can include:

- Prompt management of waste
- Correct disposal of sharps to prevent injury (in accordance with the ICH Sharps Procedure)
- Proper hand hygiene (including after using the toilet, before and after food handling or after touching waste items)
- Using PPE such as gloves particularly where you are handling bodily fluids or things containing bodily fluids, or touching another person's mouth or eyes
- Moving people away from the area where the hazard exists

4.3 Cleaning of Waste

To clean spills of bodily fluids:

- Isolate the area
- Put on gloves. An apron and eye glasses should also be worn if available
- Cover any exposed broken skin with a waterproof dressing before handling waste products
- Clean the surface by soaking up fluid with disposable paper towels
- Place any waste (paper towels) in a plastic bag and dispose of appropriately
- Use disinfectant (using manufacturer's instructions) or bleach (one part bleach to 10 parts water) and wash the area with a disposable cloth, leave for 10 minutes
- Wash the area again with hot water and a normal detergent (in accordance with manufacturer's instructions)
- Dry the area
- Dispose of paper towels or cloths, take off gloves and other PPE and put into a plastic bag, tie the plastic bag closed
- Wash hands thoroughly using soap and water for at least 15 seconds
- If a floor is wet, ensure that:
 - A wet floor sign is placed out if available,
 - Else, if a wet floor sign is not available, ensure that the area is isolated or that people are warned of the risk

Sharps should be handled in accordance with the ICH Sharps Procedure.

Items which have come into contact with bodily fluids but which are not waste, such as clothing, should be placed in a separate bag and sealed if possible. If the bag is being stored for collection (e.g. if a person has gone to hospital) it must be marked as 'Infectious Waste' using the image below:



Any items kept should be stored in a place not accessible to service users or members of the public.

If items are not being kept for pickup, the sealed bag should be disposed of immediately.

Waste should be disposed of as soon as possible.

4.4 Contact with Bodily Fluids

If a person comes into contact with bodily fluid:

- Flush the area with running water
- Wash the area with warm water and soap
- Report the incident
- Seek medical advice

ICH will investigate (as appropriate) any incident involving contact with bodily fluids and take action to prevent it happening in future.

4.5 Reporting

Workers who are involved in cleaning waste must report this to the Manager so that the first aid kit can be restocked if necessary. Reporting should also take place if waste items are being stored temporarily onsite.

If this involves an injury or other situation which necessitates an incident report, this should be documented using the appropriate incident form.

4.6 Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- Workers are trained in this procedure
- Any infectious waste stored is labelled appropriately and is not accessible to the public
- Notifying HR if first aid kits need to be restocked

Workers are responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate and prompt reporting takes place
- Following proper procedures when dealing with waste
- Reporting incidents

5. Review

This procedure shall be reviewed every 3 years or after an incident involving contact with bodily fluids.

6. Related Documents

Policies

ICH Workplace Health and Safety Policy
ICH Risk Management Policy

Procedures

ICH Sharps Procedure
ICH Incident Management Procedure

References

Better Health Channel Victoria, 'Workplace Safety – Infection Control'