

# Managing the Regulatory Environment

## ADA's Guidelines for Practice Success™ (GPS™)

### ADA Tip Sheet on Medical Waste Disposal

Make sure that:

- Medical waste is properly separated and contained.
  - ✓ While the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) provides some general information regarding medical waste, the requirements for separating medical waste vary by state so be sure to check local regulations.
- Used sharps, such as needles, burs and scalpels are stored separately from other medical waste.
  - ✓ See the articles on [Sharps Safety, Disposal, and Safe Injection Practices](#) and the [ADA Do's and Don'ts for the Safe Handling of Instruments and Sharps](#) in this module for information on handling and disposing of used sharps.
- Extracted teeth that are being discarded are subject to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard since the agency considers them potentially infectious material.
  - ✓ Extracted teeth that contain should not be placed in medical waste containers that will be incinerated.
    - It's a good idea to review state and local regulations regarding disposal of amalgam to ensure you're in compliance with any regulations.
    - You may want to check with metal recycling companies since some may accept extracted teeth with amalgam. Make you ask about any recyclers' policies and handling instructions.
  - ✓ Extracted teeth may be returned to patients who ask for them and at that point, they are not to present a health risk and do not fall under OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard.
  - ✓ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [Q&A on Extracted Teeth](#) also provides helpful information.
- Contact your contracted waste handling service for instructions on storing and handling medical waste.
  - ✓ Find out if they can provide approved containers for storing and transporting medical waste.
  - ✓ Confirm what documentation they'll provide to confirm that medical waste has been removed from the practice and disposed of in accordance with local regulations.
    - Your business agreement with the waste management company should include a clause requiring the handler to notify you of the waste's final destination.
    - Keep all documents from your waste disposal company concerning pick up and disposal in case you need to access that information in the future.
- No one on staff ever transports medical waste.

**Resources:** EPA [Medical Waste](#)  
 ADA GPS Managing Regulatory: [Sharps Safety, Disposal, and Safe Injection Practices](#)  
[ADA Do's and Don'ts for the Safe Handling of Instruments and Sharps](#) [PDF]  
 CDC [Q&A on Extracted Teeth](#)

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