



FAQ for biohazardous waste generators

Biohazardous waste generators have specific responsibilities when it comes to managing biohazardous waste. Here are some frequently asked questions for generators based on the **Industry Code of Practice for Managing Biohazardous Waste (Including Clinical and Related Wastes)**, also known as the Biohazardous Waste Industry Code (BWI Code).

These FAQs give general guidance only. Biohazardous waste management is highly regulated with many measures required under law. Refer to the BWI Code and relevant regulations in your jurisdiction to understand both mandatory and recommended obligations.

Q1. How do I know if biohazardous waste regulations apply to me?

Various definitions of biohazardous waste exist across different jurisdictions. For more information, refer to your state/territory regulator, which may be your Environment Protection Authority or Department of Environment.

Q2. I only generate a small amount of biohazardous waste. What rules apply to me?

The same rules and regulations apply to all generators of biohazardous waste, although there may be some differences as to what is defined as biohazardous waste and how to manage it depending on the regulations in your jurisdiction.

Q3. What are my responsibilities as a waste generator?

Generators are responsible for correctly segregating and appropriately handling, containing, labelling and storing the biohazardous waste they generate. They must also ensure their waste is correctly transported and treated/disposed of by only using waste transporters and treatment/disposal facilities with appropriate licensing/approval to manage their waste. Generators are responsible for checking these licences/approvals are in place.

Managers must ensure that staff have the requisite training and knowledge to manage this waste safely, and the environment is set up to support staff to do so.

Generators must manage biohazardous waste in accordance with their jurisdiction's legislative requirements. BWI members commit to a best practice approach to managing this waste, which sometimes goes beyond legislative requirements.

For a full list of waste generators responsibilities, refer to *Section 4: Managing biohazardous waste* in the BWI Code.

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Q4. Why do I need to segregate my waste?

By classifying biohazardous wastes into groups that pose similar risks, it helps those involved in managing and treating waste for disposal to minimise environmental and human health risks.

As part of the waste management process, waste generators need to classify and segregate waste properly and according to their jurisdiction's legislation. They must also ensure that their waste is treated and disposed of correctly, which – again – relies on proper classification and source segregation.

Source segregation is particularly important for waste transport personnel and staff working downstream at waste sorting facilities, material recycling facilities and waste treatment and disposal facilities, who are all at risk of injury and harm when exposed to biohazardous wastes that have not been correctly classified and segregated.

Q5. How do I practice good source segregation?

Source segregation needs to be part of your overall waste management program so that waste is segregated at the point of generation into different waste streams to make it easier to treat and dispose of it properly. You need to have enough of the right containers onsite to enable staff to segregate waste properly.

You will need to consider the treatment technology being used to dispose of your waste. Some treatment technologies require you to have additional bins to separate components from the waste stream if they cannot be treated by that particular technology.

For more information, refer to Section 3: Classifying and segregating waste and Appendix 3: Biohazardous waste treatment processes in Australia and New Zealand in the BWI Code.

Q6. Do I need a waste management plan?

Facilities should keep a clearly documented trail of safe management practices by developing a waste management plan and keeping it updated.

About the BWI Code

The BWI Code helps anyone working with biohazardous waste to understand their responsibilities and work towards environmental best practice in the safe and cost-effective handling, transport, treatment and disposal of biohazardous waste across Australia and New Zealand.

The BWI Code is published by the Biohazard Waste Industry (BWI) division under the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia (WMRR) – the only national peak body for the \$15 bn waste and resource recovery industry.

To purchase the Code, email the WMRR national office at info@wmrr.asn.au

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