

FAQ on storing biohazardous waste

Biohazardous waste needs to be stored safely to minimise any risks. Here are some frequently asked questions on storing biohazardous waste 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. Where should I store biohazardous waste?

Biohazardous waste needs to be stored in areas that are designed to minimise any risks associated with managing these wastes.

Biohazardous waste storage areas, generator facilities, transport premises and treatment/disposal facilities should meet the general storage requirements and storage area design requirements listed in Section 8 of the BWI Code.

Q2. How should I store bio waste?

General storage requirements cover safety, location, signage, security, adequate containment measures and appropriate licensing. For more information, see Section 8 of the BWI Code.

Any biohazardous waste not treated or destroyed on arrival at a disposal premises is to be managed to meet relevant conditions and standards to prevent any noxious odours or offence. All treated waste is to be segregated from untreated waste to prevent cross-contamination.

All refrigerator facilities are to be contained in a secure area.

Q3. How do I design a safe storage area?

Biohazardous waste should be stored on an impervious surface such as concrete, surrounded by an appropriate bund to contain any spills. The base and walls of banded areas are to be free of gaps or cracks. Where vehicles need to access the banded area, you should build bunds to stop them from being damaged by vehicles.

The banded area should drain to a sump or sewer to collect spills and washdown waters. No liquid waste, washdown waters or stormwater contaminated with biohazardous waste can be disposed of via the stormwater drainage system.

For more information, see Section 8 of the BWI Code.

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Q4. What signage do I need?

Waste storage areas should be signposted with the biohazard symbol and other labelling appropriate to the types of waste stored in the area (e.g. clinical, cytotoxic).

Q5. How do I manage spills?

The storage area must have the equipment and materials needed to manage spills and staff need to be appropriately trained to use them.

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