

FAQ on transporting biohazardous waste

Here are some frequently asked questions on transporting 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.

Management responsibilities

Q1. What regulations apply to transporting bio waste?

Biohazardous waste needs to be transported and loaded/unloaded safely in accordance with dangerous goods transport legislation and the relevant regulations and Standards.

It can only be transported to premises licensed to accept such waste and it must be tracked and reported in accordance with waste tracking requirements in the applicable jurisdiction.

Q2. What are my responsibilities as a waste transporter?

Waste transporters need to meet all relevant legislative requirements relating to the transport, treatment and disposal of biohazardous wastes, and maintain all applicable license and approvals.

Vehicles must be appropriately equipped and maintained. Drivers need to be trained, with evidence kept on their training.

For a full list of waste transport responsibilities, refer to Sections 4 and 9 in the BWI Code.

Q3. Do waste transporters need a waste management plan?

A waste management plan is part of providing a complete waste management service.

Q4. What do I do if waste is not being properly segregated or contained by the waste generator?

Transporters must refuse to collect any waste container that is overflowing, obviously contains the wrong waste, wastes that are not identifiable, or which have been tampered with.

Waste transport companies should report any such issues to the generator.

Q5. Can I transport waste to unlicensed premises?

No. Biohazardous waste can only be transported to premises licensed to accept such wastes.

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Q6. What insurance is needed?

Appropriate vehicle and public liability insurance shall be obtained in accordance with transport and dangerous goods codes in Australia and New Zealand. The insurance shall include third party property clause with respect to loss or damage as a result of fire, explosion or spillage of waste. Clean-up costs incurred by, or on behalf of, a public authority shall also be covered.

Vehicles

Q7. What vehicles can I use?

Biohazardous waste must be transported in dedicated dangerous-goods-licensed (where necessary) and suitably equipped vehicles with relevant government approvals.

Section 9.2 of the BWI Code sets out the required features for transport vehicles.

Q8. Can I transport biohazardous waste with other types of waste?

Biohazardous waste must not be transported with incompatible materials unless the wastes are separated from these materials in a purpose-designed enclosure that meets the conditions in this section.

Q9. Can I get an exemption from some transport requirements?

Regulatory authorities can grant exemptions from some transport requirements, for example, to allow small volumes of waste to be transported in a non-dedicated vehicle such as a car used by home healthcare professionals.

Waste must still be appropriately and safely contained, securely segregated from other materials and secured in the load compartment to prevent spillage. Vehicles should have a spill kit in the vehicle and the load compartment should ideally be lockable and separate from the driver's cabin.

See Section 9.2.6 in the BWI code for more specific information.

Vehicle signage

Q10. Do I need to display signage on the vehicle?

Vehicle signage must be displayed on the front and back of the vehicle for cytotoxic and biohazardous waste. This also applies to pharmaceutical waste in Australia.

Vehicle signage must comply with all relevant jurisdiction requirements as well as dangerous goods codes (if the biohazardous waste is considered as dangerous goods under the codes).




Q11. What signage do vehicles need to display?

The type of placards to use depends on the legislative requirements of the relevant agency in each jurisdiction. Contact your regulatory agency to check what placard(s) to display and any specific conditions that apply. Examples of vehicle placards from the *UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* are shown below:

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	Pharmaceutical waste	Biohazardous waste	Cytotoxic waste
Placard design			
Placard colour	Black on white (reflective)	Black on white (reflective)	White on purple (reflective)
Placard placement	Front and rear of vehicle (Australia only)	Front and rear of vehicle	Front and rear of vehicle
Hazard class	UN Hazard Class 6.1/Toxic	UN Hazard Class 6.2/Infectious substance	UN Hazard Class 6.1/Toxic and recommended cytotoxic waste symbol

Source: UN

Waste containment

Q12. Can I transport waste in liners?

No, waste liners must be placed into an outer container. This includes shipping containers.

Q13. Can I use chutes to move biohazardous waste?

No. Chutes must not be used to move biohazardous waste.

Q14. Do staff need to be trained?

Staff need to be trained in the correct procedures for handling, containing, storing and transporting biohazardous waste.

For more on training and education and workplace health and safety refer to sections 6, 12 and 13 in the BWI Code.

Sharps

Q15. How do waste transport companies manage sharps?

Waste transport companies who supply, collect, service for reuse, or dispose of sharps containers are responsible for implementing workplace health and safety practices that will minimise the risk of injury to their employees. This responsibility applies during handling, transporting and disposing of full containers or their contents (in the case of reusable containers). Safe practices must also extend to cleaning and maintaining reusable containers.

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Waste transport drivers

Q16. Do drivers need special training?

Yes, drivers must complete a course of instruction on transporting biohazardous waste safely.

Drivers have a duty of care to safely operate their vehicle. They need a current relevant driver's licence and where required, a dangerous goods licence and/or a hazardous goods endorsement on their driver's licence. They also need to be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

Q17. What are drivers responsible for?

Drivers must always keep the load compartment locked when unattended and during transport. They must operate all equipment safely and keep the vehicle clean and well presented.

They must report either verbally or in writing on equipment condition daily, service failures and accidents with either vehicle or waste.

For more information, refer to Section 9 in the BWI Code.

Waste transport certificates

Q18. Does Australia require waste transport certification?

Yes – waste transporters in Australia must implement a waste transport certification system to adequately identify source and transport path to disposal. This system must comply with any jurisdictional transport certificate systems requirements.

Q19. Does New Zealand require waste transport certification?

New Zealand requires documentation to be held during transport of dangerous goods specified in NZ Standard 5433 (transport of dangerous goods on land). This record-keeping system does not require documentation to be kept on hazardous waste transport in most cases – a separate system is needed to keep effective records on transporting hazardous waste.

Q20. Who is responsible for providing waste transport certificates?

Waste transporters must complete and use transport certificates when transporting wastes, but waste generators, transporters and treatment/disposal/storage facilities all have specific responsibilities for waste transport certification, as listed in Section 9.6 of the BWI Code.

Crossing state borders

Q21. What happens if I need to transport my waste to another state or territory?

Transporting biohazardous waste across borders in Australia shall satisfy the requirements of national manifest systems as applicable. Consult the relevant authorities for details.

In Australia, transportation of biohazardous waste across jurisdiction borders should comply with the National Environment Protection (Movement of Controlled Waste Between States and Territories) Measure 1998 (NEPM), or jurisdictional legislation implementing the NEPM (where applicable).

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