

EBOLA Contaminated Waste Treatment/Disposal

Frequently Asked Questions

With the widespread actual and suspected cases of Ebola virus in West Africa, confirmed cases in the USA, and worldwide it's critically important to have the facts about appropriate disposal of medical waste which may be contaminated with Ebola virus or other hemorrhagic diseases.

Below you will find answers to frequently asked questions. Each answer includes a link to authoritative resources and pertinent information.

As specialists in safe waste disposal, we are available to answer any additional questions you may have. Please contact us for additional information and answers at 253-872-6060, toll-free in the USA 1-800-261-1041, or email us at info@incineratorguys.com

PLEASE NOTE: The Center for Disease Control (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and World Health Organization (WHO) sources of information below are subject to frequent updates and changes, and will need to be re-checked frequently.

Question #1. What is included in the category of “Ebola associated waste”?

Answer: In addition to waste generated in the care of patients with confirmed Ebola virus disease, the waste generated from (suspected) patients under investigation will require the same treatment and disposal processes until Ebola is clearly “ruled out”.

Question #2. What physical agents can eradicate the Ebola virus?

Answer. Heat, sunlight, ultraviolet light, E-Beam, and Gamma Rays will all destroy the Ebola virus.

For details visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/survivability-ebola-medical-waste.html>

Question #3. At what temperature can the Ebola Virus be destroyed?

Answer. There are several options:

- To 60°C (140°F) for 60 minutes;
- To 72-80°C (162° - 176°F) for 30 minutes; or
- Submerge the material in boiling water for five minutes.

Note: These temperatures are probably minimum levels, and should be exceeded as a cautionary measure.

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Question #4. Is incineration of medical waste an effective means of disposal?

Answer. Yes, according to the CDC's article: Information on the Survivability of the Ebola Virus in Medical Waste,

“Other heat treatments include incineration. Incinerators run at extremely high temperatures, well above the relatively low temperatures needed to kill Ebola virus. Incineration would be the best method for large or bulky items, such as mattresses. Incineration that reduces waste to ash at any temperature kills Ebola virus.³ The ash produced via incineration is NOT hazardous with respect to microbial pathogens.”

For details visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/survivability-ebola-medical-waste.html>

Question 5. Are there other heat sources that can be used to destroy the Ebola virus?

Answer. Yes, Autoclave can kill the Ebola virus under a “validated waste cycle” to 121C (250F) for at least 30 minutes depending on the load and packaging. Note: Autoclaving is probably not a realistic resource at international low resource locations.

For details visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/survivability-ebola-medical-waste.html>

Question #6. Your health care facility is *outside the USA*. How can you determine if your health care facility has developed effective procedures for handling medical waste which may contain the Ebola virus?

Answer. Begin by reviewing the standard procedures your medical facility already has in place for safely handling of medical waste, including Ebola virus. Then, review these helpful documents.

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for Non-U.S. Healthcare Settings,

For details visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/non-us-healthcare-settings.html>

This material provides four keys to international infection control: 1. Identifying and isolating suspected Ebola patients. 2. Protecting patients and healthcare workers. 3. Cleaning up safely. 4. Managing patients safely and compassionately. West African countries with Ebola outbreaks have been identified as Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be utilized by low resource countries was recommended. Training slides, including putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) were provided. Donning is high risk due to inadvertent self-contamination. The Ebola virus is spread through direct contact, and full body protection/no skin exposed (gowns/coveralls goggles/face shield, gloves, boot covers, etc., are required.

- World Health Organization (WHO): Fundamentals of Health-Care Waste Management,

For details visit: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/medicalwaste/en/guidancemanual1.pdf

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Please Note: Potential incinerator customers need to be aware that inadvertent or minor errors in the implementation of these processes involving the Ebola virus can be life threatening. This includes waste handlers, housekeeping staff, off site transport personnel, and incinerator operators. Limiting the number of personnel handling generated waste, appropriately utilizing PPE (training, practice, competence, and observation) will need to be meticulously implemented.

Question #7. How can we appropriately bag and package suspected or confirmed Ebola waste?

Answer. Your dedicated waste management team will need to develop and implement protocols and training for bagging packaging, storing, and transporting Ebola waste. First, use leak proof labeled biohazard bags with a minimum film thickness of 1.5 mils (0.0015 inches), and 175 liter (46 gallon, or smaller capacity). Outer receptacles for this Category A waste must be rigid material and utilize a 6 mil polyethylene liner. This may result in a large volume of bags and receptacles, since copious amounts of diarrhea and/or vomit contaminate may be involved.

Question #8. How can we safely dispose of sharps?

Answer. Place sharps in a container that cannot be punctured by the sharps. The container can be segregated from other medical waste for disposal. Incineration is an appropriate method of disposal. For details, see page 19 of the WHO Report, Fundamentals of Health-Care Management,

For details visit: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/medicalwaste/en/guidancemanual1.pdf

Question #9. How do we safely dispose of blood, body fluids, and infectious waste?

Answer. This material can also be incinerated. See WHO report page17

For details visit: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/medicalwaste/en/guidancemanual1.pdf

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We are not physicians, nor medical professionals. We do not purport to offer any clinical advice nor recommendations for the care of patients. Your team's success in utilizing these practices must be based solely on the appropriate implementation of the steps and procedures as set forth by the above (and other) authoritative sources.

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