



Guidelines for Management and Disposal of Waste Generated in the Tattoo Industry



BACKGROUND

In August 2005, Arizona adopted laws that require **used tattoo needles** and **any waste exposed to human blood** that is generated during the creation of a tattoo to be disposed in the same manner as biohazardous medical waste.

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes § 44-1342:

- A. A tattoo needle and any waste exposed to human blood that is generated during the creation of a tattoo shall be disposed of in the same manner as **biohazardous medical waste** pursuant to Section 49-761.
- B. A person who disposes of a tattoo needle or any waste generated in the creation of a tattoo in violation of this section is liable for a civil penalty of up to \$500 for each violation.

The applicable regulations are available on our Web site:
<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/solid/rules.html>

HOW DO I PACKAGE MY WASTE PRIOR TO SHIPPING IT OFF SITE?

Place medical sharps (tattoo and piercing needles) into a sharps container to avoid stick hazards.



All other materials exposed to human blood, including gauze, bandages and paper towels used during the creation of a tattoo must be packaged in one of the following manners:

Red Disposable Plastic Bags

The bags must be:

- Leak resistant and impervious to moisture
- Puncture resistant for sharps and strong enough to prevent tearing or bursting
- Sealed to prevent leakage during transport
- Placed in a secondary container, bearing the universal biohazardous medical waste symbol, to prevent breakage of the bag in storage and while handling. This container may be either disposable or reusable.

Reusable Container bearing the Universal Biohazardous Medical Waste Symbol

These containers must be:

- Leak proof on all sides and bottom
- Closed with a tight fitting lid
- Constructed of easily cleanable materials that are impervious to liquids and resistant to corrosion by disinfection agents and hot water.
- Cleaned after each use unless the inner surfaces of the container have been protected by a disposable liner or bag. "Cleaning" means agitation to remove visible particles combined with either exposure to hot water at a temperature of at least 180 degrees Fahrenheit for a minimum of 15 seconds or exposure to an EPA-approved chemical disinfectant.

Although not required, ADEQ recommends that tattoo parlors store medical sharps and other materials exposed to human blood as described above once these wastes are generated.

HOW DO I PROPERLY DISPOSE OF MY TATTOO WASTE?

Tattoo waste must be shipped using an ADEQ-registered medical waste transporter and treated by an ADEQ permitted biohazardous medical waste treatment facility. A list of permitted treatment facilities and registered transporters can be found on ADEQ's Web site at:

<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/solid/lc.html#ld>

Waste Transported Off Site for Treatment

- Biohazardous medical waste must be packaged in one of the ways listed above prior to transport.
- The biohazardous waste generator must arrange for transportation of the waste to a permitted biohazardous medical waste treatment facility through an **ADEQ registered transporter**.
- The generator must obtain a signed copy of a **tracking document** signed by the waste transporter to signify acceptance of the waste. The

generator must retain a copy of this document for his or her records for at least one year from the date of acceptance.

- Medical sharps may be shipped off site using a registered biohazardous waste transporter as described above provided they are placed into a medical sharps container or treated by one of the described alternatives.

Alternative Treatment Options for Sharps

- Biohazardous medical waste may be treated on site, using incineration, autoclaving, or an ADEQ approved alternative treatment method, provided the generator follows the requirements of A.A.C. R1813-1405, et. al.
- Medical Sharps may also be treated on site. After the biohazard has been treated you must place the medical sharps into a sharps container after rendering them incapable of creating a stick hazard by using an encapsulation agent or any other process that prevents a stick hazard. Medical sharps handled in the manner may be disposed as solid waste or in the regular trash.
- Medical sharps can be packaged and mailed to a treatment facility via a mail-back system, as prescribed by the mail-back systems operator.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions or comments you may contact:

ADEQ Waste Programs
Solid Waste Inspections and Compliance Unit
1110 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 771-4673 or
toll free at (800) 234-5677 Ext. 771-4673

Hearing impaired persons call
ADEQ's TDD line: (602) 771-4829

Visit our Web site at: www.azdeq.gov