



## 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

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