



FACILITATOR SCRIPT

Waste Management in Aged Care (Residential [RCH]& Home Care [HC])

The facilitator's script is designed to support the delivery of aged care education on waste management and should be used alongside the Toolbox Education Session for Residential Care, Toolbox Education Session for Home Care, and the Quick Quiz.

Duration: 10–15 minutes

1. Introduction

The session aims to review safe waste management practices in aged care, tailored to the relevant care setting.

Waste management forms a core component of Standard Precautions and aligns with guidance from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, and legislative requirements under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, as well as jurisdictional waste management guidelines.

Effective waste segregation:

- Reduces the risk of infection transmission
- Prevents sharps injuries
- Protects residents, clients, families, and healthcare workers (HCWs)
- Supports compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
- Promotes environmentally sustainable practices.

Ask group:

“Why do you think waste segregation is so important in aged care?”

2. Types and Management of Waste

Explain:

General Waste

- Includes:
 - Food scraps (appropriate food scrapes may be composted)
 - Paper, cardboard, magazines/newspapers
 - Plastic or foil packaging
 - Minimally contaminated PPE
 - Jurisdiction/local council dependent:
 - Items contaminated with small amounts of blood.
 - Items contaminated with small to moderate amounts of body fluids (e.g. wound dressings, incontinence aids, emptied colostomy/ileostomy aids)



- Colour coded bag/bin in accordance with jurisdiction/local council requirements
- Council collection waste removal

Clinical Waste

RCH

- Includes:
 - Items saturated with blood or infectious body fluids, human tissue and laboratory waste (e.g. wound dressings, catheter bags/colostomy and ileostomy bags that cannot be safely emptied, heavily contaminated PPE).
- Colour coded in accordance with jurisdiction requirements, labelled with biohazard symbol, placed into a clinical waste bag in a lidded, lined bin or wheelie bin.

HC

- Where generated by client – placed in two plastic bags (double bagged) and disposed of in council general waste bin.

Sharps waste

- Includes:
 - Needles, insulin nibs, lancets, disposable razors, ampules.
- Dispose of in an Australian/New Zealand (AS/NZ) Standards compliant sharps container
- Colour coded – yellow (clinical), purple (cytotoxic)
- Sharps containers must not exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ capacity or the marked line level

Pharmaceutical waste: (excluding cytotoxic)

- Includes:
 - Expired, ceased, improperly stored/spilt medicines or those that belonged to a deceased person.
- Should be securely stored in a pharmacy returns container until collection by pharmacy or provider delivery.
- Disposal of scheduled medicines must be in accordance with relevant jurisdictional requirements.

Cytotoxic Waste

RCH

- Includes:
 - Items contaminated with cytotoxic medications / contaminated body fluids (e.g. PPE, medication cup/spoon/applicator, incontinence aids) or cytotoxic medication for disposal (cytotoxic medications expired, ceased, improperly stored/spilt or those that belonged to a deceased person)
- Utilise risk based cytotoxic PPE, including nitrile gloves
- Purple-labelled waste bag with telophase symbol
- Lidded and bag-lined bin or directly into the purple-lined wheelie bin

HC

- Where generated by client – placed in two plastic bags (double bagged) and disposed of in council general waste bin.



Confidential Waste

- Confidential paper waste is to be shredded or placed in a secure locked, jurisdiction colour coded bin – requires licenced waste contractor collection.

Ask:

“Where should a blood-soaked dressing go?”

“What about a used insulin needle?”

4. Handling & PPE

Focus: Waste handling is risk-based

Minimum standards:

- Hand Hygiene
- Standard precautions
- Risk-based transmission-based precautions and use of PPE
- Never drag or hold waste / waste bags against the body
- Avoid compressing or reaching into filled waste bags
- Secure bags before transporting

Sharps safety reminder:

- Do not recap/reuse/bend/break or manipulate needles/pens
- Check the environment for any hazardous or sharp items
- Dispose immediately at the point of care – Australian/New Zealand Standards compliant sharp container
- Sharps containers must not exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ capacity or the marked line level
- Report sharp injuries to their direct line manager/team leader and follow organisational policies/procedures

Ask:

“What would you do if you found a loose sharp in a linen skip?”

5. Residential Care vs Home Care Differences

RCH

- Dedicated, colour coded waste bags/bins
- Facility guided / scheduled waste management
- Secure storage area with blood and body fluid spills kit
- Sharps containers must be upright, secure, option for wall mounting and away from children
- Council and licensed contractor collections – via service

HC

- Respect the client's home environment and minimise risk to clients, families, visitors, children and pets.



- The provider or client may supply colour-coded bags, PPE, sharps containers and/or spill kits, depending on organisational agreements.
- Providers must ensure appropriate PPE and waste supplies are available during visits.
- Sharps containers must remain upright, closed and away from children and pets, with placement risk assessed for safe use.
- Full client-generated sharps containers must be returned to a pharmacy or approved collection point.
- Spill kit placement — permanent or visit-based — must be risk assessed.
- Providers must follow organisational policy for safe off-site waste removal and secure vehicle transport.
- Waste disposal must comply with local council, organisational contractual and licensed waste contractor requirements.

Ask:

“What extra risks exist in a home environment?”

6. Key Take-Home Messages

- Segregate at point of care
- Ensure appropriate waste stream disposal
- HH and correct PPE use
- Never mix waste streams
- Follow organisational IPC policy
- Sharp and hazard safety is a priority

Close with:

Safe waste practice is everyone’s responsibility

7. Endorsement /Approval

Version	Date	Addition/Amendments	Author	Review By
1.0	June 2026	New Resource	C. Spinks ACIPC IPC CNC, ACIPC Aged Care Working Group	Advancing IPC Practice and Standards Committee

8. Contact Information

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