

Medical Waste Application Frequently-asked Questions

The Medical Waste Management Act (MWMA) was enacted in 1990 to address the handling, storage, treatment and disposal of medical waste in the state of California. The Marin County Environmental Health Services is the designated local enforcement agency (EA) implementing the medical waste program in Marin County. A recent review of the program prompted a look at the generators of medical waste in the County. As a result, letter and survey/application was recently sent to medical waste generators who are not currently registered or permitted with the EA.

A “medical waste generator” means any person whose act or process produces medical waste and includes, but is not limited to, a provider of health care, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 56.05 of the Civil Code. The following are examples of businesses that generate medical waste:

- a) Medical and dental offices, clinics, hospitals, surgery centers, laboratories, research laboratories, unlicensed health facilities, chronic dialysis clinic, and education and research facilities.
- b) Veterinary offices, veterinary clinics, and veterinary hospitals.
- c) Pet shops.
- d) Trauma scene waste management practitioners.

Why am I being asked to apply for a permit and charged a fee now?

As noted above, a review of the program indicated that many generators of medical waste who should be permitted, have not been.

California Health and Safety Code (CHS) Section 117825 allows each local enforcement agency to prescribe registration and permit fees necessary to pay its reasonable expenses to administer the program.

A fee schedule is approved by the Marin County Board of Supervisors periodically. A Medical Waste Program has been approved for many years, but until now we have not permitted the small quantity generators (w/o onsite treatment). You may view the latest approved ordinance at the following link,

<http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/pdf/EHS/MedicalWaste/MedicalWasteFeeSchedule.pdf> . A new fee ordinance is scheduled to be effective on July 1, 2011.

What if I don't return the application?

If you do not return the application, a site visit and inspection will be performed. If you are not in full compliance with the MWMA, a re-inspection will be conducted for compliance and you will be charged for the amount of time it takes to conduct the re-inspection.

What does my permit fee cover?

The purpose of the Medical Waste Program is to ensure proper management of medical waste to prevent injury and/or illness. The management of the Medical Waste Program includes:

tracking generators of medical waste; guidance and assistance in complying with the MWMA; issuing medical waste permits; conducting evaluations and inspections; responding/investigating complaints and emergency incidents; taking enforcement action when necessary.

I contract with a medical waste hauler to pick up my sharps and medical waste. Do I still have to be permitted by the EA?

Contracting with a medical waste hauler is a good indication that you are disposing your medical waste correctly. However, disposal is only one aspect of managing medical waste. You are still required to obtain a permit.

Do other counties charge and inspect medical waste generators?

Yes, the counties if they are the designated local enforcement agency or the California Department of Public Health inspect medical waste generators and charge for their time. Specifically, small quantity generators are also “tracked” and/or inspected by these agencies.