

Regulatory Position Statement 160

The sterilisation and cleaning of waste medical instruments containing metal for recovery

If you comply with the requirements below, we will allow the sterilisation and cleaning of waste medical instruments containing metal (both single use and end-of-life multi use) prior to recovery elsewhere without the need for an environmental permit.

Background

Sterilisation and cleaning of waste medical instruments containing metal allows the waste to be recovered rather than disposed of.

Operators of these activities in England would normally be expected to apply for an environmental permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 before they can carry out this activity. However, we consider such activities to be of low risk provided they are conducted in the manner set out in this position statement and will therefore not require a permit.

Our approach

We will not pursue an application for an environmental permit for this activity where:

- The waste is intended for recovery (this position specifically excludes the sterilisation and cleaning of waste medical instruments containing metal for re-use).
- The producer of the waste ensures that the items are recovered using a process that renders the waste both unrecognisable and beyond use to prevent them being illegally re-used.
- The waste is produced at the same site as where the sterilisation and cleansing occurs (e.g. hospital); or returned to the same site by staff working in domestic premises in the community (e.g. midwives or emergency personnel).
- You treat less than 1 tonne/ day.
- The sterilisation process is carried out in accordance with HTM 2010 'Sterilization: Management Policy' and HTM30 (HTM01) 'Decontamination of Surgical Instruments, and CFPP 01.01 for the Management and decontamination of surgical instruments used in acute care, 2012.
- Appropriate records and certification are kept for each batch of waste.



- Sterilisation plants used under this position have been designed and installed and are serviced in accordance with environmental standard ISO 13485:2003.
- The storage, transfer and transport of the waste complies with the requirements of the [Hazardous Waste Regulations](#) and the requirements of the [Duty of Care](#) and the [recommendations of management of healthcare waste](#).
- You meet the relevant objectives of the Waste Framework Directive;
 - '... ensuring that waste management is carried out without endangering human health, without harming the environment and in particular:
 - (i) without risk to water, air, soil, plants or animals;
 - (ii) without causing a nuisance through noise or odours; and
 - (iii) without adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.'

What wastes can be treated under this position?

The waste codes below are those listed in the List of Wastes (LoW) Regulations. You should read the [guidance on LoW](#) to make sure that the waste type you want to treat fits within the waste code in the table below. You should also ensure the waste fits the written description.

EWC Code	Description
18 01 01	Sharps (except 18 01 03*). See notes 1 and 2.
18 01 03*	Wastes whose collection and disposal is subject to special requirements in order to prevent infection. See note 2.
18 02 01	Sharps (except 18 02 02*). See notes 1 and 2.
18 02 02*	Wastes whose collection and disposal is subject to special requirements in order to prevent infection. See note 2.

Note 1 - Where the 18 01 01 and 18 02 01 codes have been correctly assigned in accordance with the Safe Management of Healthcare Waste.

Note 2 - This is limited to waste, metal containing, medical instruments only.

Enforcement

If you comply with the requirements of this regulatory position statement, we would not normally take enforcement action unless the activity has caused, or is likely to cause, pollution or harm to health. For a more detailed explanation of this enforcement position, please see our [Enforcement and Sanctions](#) statement.

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0845 988 1188

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Related exemptions

Storage of the treated waste may be carried out in accordance with one of the following non-waste framework directive (NWFD) exemptions:

- NWFD exemption '[Temporary Storage at a Place Controlled by the Producer](#)'; or
- NWFD exemption '[Temporary Storage at the Place of Production](#)'.

Further advice

Further advice on dealing with [hazardous waste](#) can be found on our website.

This position will be reviewed by September 2016.

MWRP RPS 160 Version: 1
Issued: February 2014