

Principles of Medical Waste Management

Order of importance: people safety (patients, employees, others) > environmental safety > disposal costs

Minimize production of waste, before you have to store, treat, and dispose of the waste.

Mixing is easy. Separating is hard.

- Don't mix waste streams unless you know what you are doing. Don't dilute waste unless there is a very good reason to do so.
- Don't mix two different types of waste together.

The closer (in both space and time) you address the waste, the better.

Assume you are always responsible for your waste even if you pay someone to take it away.

Segregate waste by type, as close to the point of generation as possible. Get all your employees involved.

Treatment and disposal costs vary by geography. As a rule of thumb, regulated waste (infectious, hazardous, radioactive) costs an order of magnitude more to treat and dispose of than general municipal solid waste

Employ life-cycle thinking in procurement of materials.

Keep in mind the Triple Bottom Line - In operations and waste management activities, consider financial, social, and environmental effects, or profit, people, and the planet.

