

Potential Waste Disposal Issues

1. Identify potential waste disposal issues e.g., sharps, dressings, soiled clothing
2. Disposal process required for the home as determined by client e.g., sharps bin, gloves, dressings.

Waste Issues	Disposal Process	Disposal Location
Soiled sanitary or incontinence pads	Bagging X2 and no > than two third capacity (wearing PPE)	General outside household garbage bin (Dark Green or Red lid)
Dressings	Bagging X 2 and no > than two third capacity (wearing PPE)	General outside household garbage bin (Dark Green or Red lid)
Soiled material such as paper towels, materials	Bagging X2 and no > than two third capacity (wearing PPE)	General outside household garbage bin (Dark Green or Red lid)
Soiled clothing (if not washable)	Bagging X 2 and no > than two third capacity (wearing PPE)	General outside household garbage bin (Dark Green or Red lid)
Medication – unused	Place in secure container	Return to local pharmacy
Disinfectants	Sewer system using running cold water wearing PPE (or as instructed by client)	As determined by the client
Spills	Wearing PPE tissues or paper towel, double bagging	General outside household garbage bin (Dark Green or Red Lid)
Needles/sharps (where applicable)	e.g., Place in Sharps bin	Sharps Bin as provided by Client and/or AHC

(Soiled may mean urine, blood, saliva, mucus, or feces)

Environmental Review

This list areas for disposal of waste in the participant’s environment.

Waste Disposal	Location
Disposal Bins – inside	As determined by the client
Disposal Bins – outside	As determined by the client
Sharps disposal (where provided)	As determined by the client
Soiled Clothing	As determined by the client
Location of gloves and bags to collect waste.	As determined by the client

EMERGENCY SPILLS (such as household chemical)

In the event of a spill any attempt to clean should only be done if it is safe to do so. If this is not possible, discuss this with the client, remove or yourself and the client from any immediate danger, call 000 and AT HOME CARE.

If the spill can be cleaned, you can refer to **APPENDIX 1** or reference the Working from Home Booklet – Section 4 – Chemical Safety and Section 5 – Infection Control.

Reporting Clinical or Hazardous Substances

Any concerns about clinical or hazardous substances should be reported immediately to your Engagement Coordinator and then by completing an Incident Report Form via the APP.

This will record details of the incident/hazard and allow the Quality, Compliance and Risk Manager or their delegate to investigate, review, and respond as required.

This may include such things as removing yourself and the client from the environment, calling the Poisons Information Line on 13 11 26, contacting emergency services if not already actioned or attending the home to assess the situation.

APPENDIX 1

Chemical Safety

Within a client's home environment workers may use several general household chemical products to perform cleaning and maintenance duties. Although domestic products are less toxic than their commercial equivalent, repeated and sustained use may have health effects ranging from minor skin irritation to breathing problems for some workers.

Some general household cleaning products are classified as **hazardous substances and therefore are considered dangerous with continued use. Hazardous Household cleaning products include:**

- Bathroom cleaners such as Exit Mould, Domestos & White King that contain chlorine bleach
- Aerosol Oven Cleaners that contain caustic soda
- Cloudy Ammonia & Brasso that contain ammonia

All cleaning products should be checked for their contents, storage, and safety. All cleaning products should be stored in their original containers, with labels clearly visible.

Elimination is the preferred means of controlling the risk of exposure to hazardous substances or using alternative, less hazardous products are recommended. Some principles you can rely on are:

- Avoid ammonia-based cleaning products & caustic cleaners
- Avoid products containing chlorine bleach
- Avoid use of pressure-pack aerosols
- Never mix chemicals – they can interact, produce toxic fumes, and cause damage to the lungs and eyes
- Never use chemicals if they are not in their original containers with original labels and safety instructions
- Always read safety instructions on containers and use chemicals as instructed
- Always use chemicals in a well-ventilated space – open windows, turn on exhaust fans
- Always use hand pump sprays, spraying onto cleaning cloths not directly on to surfaces
- Always wear gloves when using chemicals
- Always rinse cleaning cloths after using chemicals
- Always store chemicals in a safe place, preferably in a locked cupboard
- If a spill occurs, and safe to do so wipe up chemicals per the instructions above
- Discard contaminated materials into the rubbish bin

If during your employment, you feel there is a risk or hazard this is to be reported to your Engagement Coordinator.

Infection Control

You may work with multiple clients with varying degrees of support requirements. As such, they may be exposed to infectious diseases at the home sites and may be at risk of contracting infections.

Infections may be contracted via:

- direct contact with blood or body fluids through broken skin or splashing of mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth)
- ingestion via contaminated food, food preparation surfaces or unwashed hands
- inhalation of air borne droplets from coughing or sneezing

General home & personal care activities which may pose a risk to you are:

- Unhygienic surfaces (such as bench tops, toilet seats).
- Unhygienic personal practices (such as not washing hands after using the toilet)
- Inappropriate food storage & handling
- Inappropriate disposal of contaminated waste
- Inappropriate disposal of sharps including needles, lancets, broken glass etc.
- Close body contact during delivery of personal care.

The application of simple & safe standard or **universal precautions** will assist in minimising the risk of cross infection. Universal precautions are careful steps taken to minimise the risk of cross infection based on the assumption that all blood and body fluids are potentially infectious.

Any body fluids may be infectious such as blood, saliva, urine, faeces, sputum, and secretions from open wounds. Along with hand washing, the skin must be protected using barriers such as gloves, glasses (if splashing is likely), plastic aprons and masks. Workers should cover any open cuts, grazes, or wounds with a waterproof dressing.

Hand washing

Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infection. Workers should wash their hands:

- Before providing client care
- Prior to food preparation
- Immediately after contact with blood or body fluids
- After contact with equipment used
- Before and after wearing gloves
- After going to the toilet
- After touching their nose or hair
- Before and after eating or after attending to cleaning jobs especially in the bathroom and laundry
- On completion of client care



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Whenever undertaking tasks that may be associated with the spread of infection you should ensure you have appropriate PPE which At Home Care can provide if not available within the client's home not that wearing gloves does not replace the need for hand washing.

If you have any open wounds/cuts/rashes to the hands you should always wear protective gloves. To prevent the spread of infection, you should:

- Always carry a pair of disposable gloves
- Wear disposable gloves when showering clients or changing soiled linen
- Wear disposable gloves when in contact with clients with non-intact skin
- Wear gloves when handling detergents and cleaning chemicals
- Wear gloves when cleaning toilet, commode areas
- Wash hands with warm soap and water before and after leaving client homes
- All gloves should be stored in a dry place and not used from home site to home site
- Apply a water-based moisturiser or barrier cream to prevent irritation from repeated hand washing

Waste Management - SPILLS

- Dispose of soiled sanitary or incontinence pads (wearing gloves) by double bagging and placing in general household rubbish (Dark Green or Red Lid).
- Dispose of sharps (needles, blood glucose lancets) in approved sharps containers provided.
- Wipe up accidental blood spills (wearing gloves) with paper towels and dispose by double bagging and placing in general household rubbish.
- Carefully clean any surfaces/equipment contaminated by blood spill with a cleaning agent containing bleach on a paper towel. **Bleach is a hazardous chemical and is only to be used for cleaning after blood spills. Take extreme care to avoid contact with bleach and ensure this is done with a window/s open or the use of exhaust fans if available.** Dispose of the paper towel by double bagging and placing in the general household rubbish.
- Where appropriate such as in a Specialist Disability Home (multiple residents) the use of a general-purpose spill kit should also be used.

Accidental exposure to blood or body fluids or sharps injury

In the event of accidental exposure to blood or body fluids, or a skin penetrating injury from a sharp object, you should:

- Wash the contaminated area thoroughly with warm, running water.
- Contact the At Home Care the report the incident – one of our Registered Nurses will be available to offer support and in advising the appropriate action.