

Purpose

To ensure the safe handling and disposal of hazardous waste and materials per the Texas Licensing Standards for Home and Community Support Services Agencies found at 558.286 and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard found at 29 CFR 1910.1200, both of which are incorporated here by reference.

Policy

The Agency will ensure that hazardous waste and materials in all of the Agency's workplaces are properly and safely managed from handling and storing through disposing to protect the Agency's clients and its employees, volunteers, and contractors (known collectively as employees).

Definitions

- A. Contaminated: the presence, or reasonably anticipated presence, of blood or bodily fluids.
- B. Hazardous chemical: any chemical which is classified as a physical or health hazard.
- C. Hazardous materials/waste: include, but are not limited to, chemotherapy agents, blood products, blood soaked items, infectious waste, laboratory specimens, those requiring special handling, sharps, and medical gases.
- D. Sharps: include, but are not limited to, hypodermic needles, hypodermic syringes with attached needles, scalpel blades, razor blades, disposable razors, disposable scissors used in medical procedures, intravenous stylets, rigid introducers, and broken glass.

Procedure

- A. The Agency's Supervisor evaluating the client for admission will provide information to him/her or his/her representative regarding handling hazardous materials and disposing hazardous waste in the home to include, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Placing all needles and syringes in a leak-proof hard plastic or metal container that is closable; and
 - a. Keep the container upright to prevent sharps and any liquids from spilling out of the container.
 - b. Keep the container out of the reach of pets, children, and others not needing access.
 - 2. Placing soiled bandages, disposable pads/sheets and medical gloves, masks and gowns in securely fastened plastic bags before placing them in the garbage can with other trash.
 - 3. If the Agency has a concern for the safety of its staff related to the client's or the client's representative not handling hazardous materials or disposing of hazardous waste properly, the client/client's representative will be counseled.
 - a. If the behavior persists, the client may be transferred to another agency of his/her choice or be discharged from the Agency.
 - b. If this decision is made, the Agency's Policy PE.4 Client Transfer or PE.5 Client Discharge, as applicable and incorporated here by reference, will be followed.
 - 4. The client or the client's representative will sign and date on the appropriate form acknowledging this information has been provided.

- a. The Agency's representative will sign and date the appropriate form, also.
 - b. If the client is unable to sign/date the appropriate form, the reason why will be provided on the form.
 - c. The original signed/dated appropriate form will be kept in the client's record at the Agency and a copy will be given to the client or the client's representative.
- B. As part of an employee's orientation, s/he will be informed about the handling and disposing of hazardous chemicals and/or hazardous waste in any of the Agency's workplaces.
1. This training will include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Types of hazardous chemicals in the employee's work area before the initial assignment and when new hazards are introduced;
 - b. Specific hazards related to the chemicals in his/her work area;
 - c. Appropriate protective measures when handling hazardous chemicals;
 - d. Where the Safety Data Sheets are kept at the Agency; and
 - e. How to handle contaminated sharps including, but not limited to:
 - i. Do not recap needles;
 - ii. Dispose of sharps in the client's leak-proof container immediately;
 - iii. Follow standard precautions; and
 - iv. Report any needlestick or other sharps injury to the Administrator or designee immediately for initiation of the Agency's Policy EC.3 Occurrence/Incident Reporting that is incorporated here by reference.
 2. Employees will be responsible for knowing, observing, and implementing this information about hazardous materials within the workplace.
 3. Employees are expected to comply with the Agency's rules, Federal regulations such as from OSHA, and state regulations at all times while at work and in all of the Agency's workplaces.
 - a. Compliance includes attending all of the Agency's inservices on hazardous materials.
 4. Documentation of the orientation and training will be kept in the individual's personnel file.
- C. The Agency will follow OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (Standard) to establish and implement a hazard communication program.
1. The Agency's Administrator or designee will obtain and become familiar with the Standard and implement the written hazard communication program to include:
 - a. Selecting employees for particular activities such as preparing trainings, etc.;
 - b. Ensuring hazardous chemical containers are labeled;
 - c. Maintaining Safety Data Sheets for each hazardous chemical in the workplace; and
 - d. Evaluating and revising the program as needed.