

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY 17, 1991

Dear Citizen:

Thank you for your request concerning the proper disposal of medical waste (MW) generated in the home. As a midwife you come in contact with MW as a result of the birthing process in the home. EPA is addressing issues involving home health care MW through educational booklets and data gathering efforts.

The Medical Waste Tracking Act (MwTA) required EPA to enact an interim final rule to manage MW. This rule is a two year regulation that ends on June 22, 1991, and regulates MW generated in five participating (covered) States. Non-participating States, such as the State of Washington, are not regulated unless they receive regulated MW from a covered State. However, State specific regulations may apply.

EPA developed national guidance to address the issue of household generated MW. The RCRA Docket mailed you a copy of EPA's booklet entitled "Disposal Tips For Home Health Care." This booklet should answer most, if not all, of your questions concerning MW management in the home.

To address the specific home health care MW that you generate while providing service, the following Federal guidance is given: (1) you can pour blood and body fluids down the sink or toilet; and (2) place the placenta in a sealed plastic bag and throw it out in the regular trash. If the placenta goes to a hospital for examination, it becomes a waste when disposed of at the hospital and is subject to local or State regulations. Below is the name and address of a Washington State contact for State specific regulations or guidance involving household MW.

Ms. Lauri Lowen
Washington State Department of Ecology
Mail Stop PV-11
Olympia, Washington 98504
(206) 867-7282

If you have any further questions regarding this matter please contact Ms. Othalene J. Lawrence at (202) 245-3509.

Sincerely,

David Bussard, Director

Characterization and Assessment Division