1. Medical Waste: Regulated Medical Waste Definition

Supplies for intravenous injection are assembled at a facility located in a State covered by the medical waste tracking program. On occasion, the sharps (hypodermic needles and syringes) do not meet quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) requirements, and are discarded. The same facility has a small health care center for employee use. On occasion, unused sharps are discarded from the health care center. Would both waste streams be considered regulated medical waste when discarded?

For unused sharps to be considered medical waste, they would have to be generated in the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of human beings or animals, in research pertaining thereto, or in the production or testing of biologicals (40 CFR 259.30(a)). In order to be regulated medical waste, the wastes from those activities must be listed in Table I in 40 CFR 259.30(a). The discarded sharps from the assembly facility are not regulated medical wastes because the sharps were not generated in the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of human beings or animals, in research pertaining thereto, or in the production or testing of biologicals. However, the unused sharps generated from the employee health care center are regulated medical waste because the sharps were generated in the context of diagnosing, treating or immunizing humans and they meet the description of Class 7 wastes (unused sharps) in the table at Section 259.30(a).

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