

Maine Department of Environmental Protection Fact Sheet

Tattoo Studio Operations and Compliance with Maine's Biomedical Waste Management Rules

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Tattoo studios generate waste sharps that are subject to the Maine Biomedical Waste Management Rules (06-096 CMR 900 (August 4, 2008)).

This fact sheet outlines the steps necessary for tattoo studios to achieve compliance with the biomedical waste rules. Maine Law and the Biomedical Waste Management Rules require the registration of facilities that generate biomedical waste. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP) administers this program. The biomedical waste generator registration requirement has been in effect since 1991.

There is an initial registration fee of \$50 to obtain a biomedical waste generator number. An annual registration fee requirement was added through the rulemaking process in 2008. This annual registration fee requirement is assessed on the average amount of biomedical waste generated per month. For tattoo studios the amount is probably \$25.

Every package of biomedical waste leaving your studio must be labeled with your biomedical waste generator number as well as the name of the studio or operator, the address, telephone number and the date packaged. There is no time limit applying to storage of biomedical waste at the generator's site.

If you think you may be registered, do not know your biomedical waste generator status or have questions about the biomedical waste rules, contact the Maine DEP at 287-2651.

Note: waste paper or cloth towels visibly contaminated with blood and protective gloves generated from tattooing and piercings or other routine first aid events do not subject your facility to the Maine Biomedical Waste Management Rules. This type of waste should be handled using universal precautions and placed in a container labeled with a biohazard symbol and lined with a regular trash bag. This trash bag may be disposed of in the regular trash. **Do not use red, biohazard bags in this situation.**

If your business has multiple facilities each facility must have its own registration number.

Disposing of Sharps Generated at Tattoo Studios

The generator or a blood borne pathogen trained employee of the generator may transport up to fifty pounds of biomedical waste to another generator or a licensed biomedical waste treatment or transfer facility without the need to obtain a Biomedical Waste Transporter License from Maine DEP.

Local hospitals may be willing to dispose of biomedical waste from tattoo studios. Contact the housekeeping or environmental services staff at the local hospital and inquire as to whether they accept waste sharps from community generators. Some hospitals do provide this service. This is usually the least costly option for small generators.

There is a list on the DEP website (<http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/biomedical/index.htm>) of commercial companies that are licensed in Maine to transport biomedical waste.

Note: the Maine DEP has licensed the companies on the list but does not make recommendations on specific companies.

The other option is called a “Mail Back Sharps” program. There are several companies offering this service. The generator orders a sharps container of the needed capacity and associated packaging, postage and treatment and disposal costs and pays those costs in advance. When the sharps container is full the generator packages it and then the package is shipped to a treatment facility by the US Postal Service. Performing an internet search on “mail back sharps” should produce several results.

For More Information

For further information regarding biomedical waste registration requirements or general questions regarding the Maine Biomedical Waste Management Rules or the Maine Hazardous Waste Management Rules; please contact us at (207) 287-2651. Or visit the Biomedical Waste Page at the DEP website:

<https://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/biomedical/index.html>