

# Clinical Waste Disposal Methodology and its impact



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**National Audit Office**  
**Environmental Audit Division**



## **1. Executive Summary**

Clinical Waste disposed of by daily functions of hospitals can be broadly categorized as Non-hazardous waste and Hazardous waste. Of this, separate identification of hazardous waste from other normal waste and they need to be disposed of systematically and safely.

A National Policy for Sri Lanka on Clinical Waste Management has been drafted in the year 2001 and it has not been approved even up to the year 2018. Furthermore, the existence of knowledge, necessity, sufficient resource for the implementation of hospital waste management efficiently and maintenance of an updated data system to evaluate that purpose is a foremost necessity. It is expected that as a result of the requirement of obtaining the environmental protection licence introduced by the Central Environmental Authority and the Schedule waste management licence, this process is monitored. As the methodology adopted for monitoring such process not at a satisfactory level underlies on this audit.

Segregation of clinical waste in terms of colour at the time of being generated clinical waste itself is very important. Even though many hospitals have introduced methodologies to separate clinical waste at the time of being generated it was observed that the required physical resources in terms of relevant colour have not been supplied.

It was observed that unprotective action taken place such as burning clinical waste in the hospital premises combustion of waste by burners exist in the hospital premises with lesser temperatures, burial of waste in the hospital premises etc. It was also observed that the balance ash and sludge after being incinerated and metamized is buried not in an environmental friendly manner in the open premises, instead of directing them to a secured earth filling.

In order to regularize the Clinical Waste Management, an integrated project with the private sector has been started by the Government in the year 2014 but its operations was stopped since 30 October 2018 as a result of a court order.

It was observed that the Clinical Waste Management Project implemented under the Australian aids had not been operated with a maximum productivity in the hospitals subjected to audit examination.

Even though, it was aimed to improve infrastructure facilities relates to waste management under the second Health Sector Development Project with the World Bank aids in order to improve waste management functions, it was observed that the provisions thereof had not been utilized at a maximum extent and the hospital utilized those funds had not been effectively utilized them.

Accordingly, action needs to be taken to make aware of the relevant sectors in order to perform the Clinical Waste Management health fully and eco-friendly and to get the projects being executed therefor done effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, laws, rules, regulations and policies, applicable for the Clinical Waste Management need to be established in conformity with the Nationally and Internationally recognized coventions and to provide sufficient human and physical resources as required. Being followed up the performance levels of the projects executed for the Clinical Waste Management and maintaining the institutional performance thereon in a maximum level these issues can be satisfactorily faced. Due to informality of these functions Clinical Waste may distress the livelihood and create various environmental problems and therefor this has become a soluble problem in reaching sustainable development in a country.