- Healthcare waste may contain certain materials that render it hazardous by virtue of its infectious, radioactive, carcinogenic etc properties
- National and regional guidelines for waste disposal must be followed (DOH Waste Management Guidelines, 2012). These guidelines assist healthcare facilities to meet their legal requirements under the Waste Management Act
- All clinical waste awaiting collection by waste contractors should be stored in locked containers away from client areas
- A risk assessment should be completed to identify the safest method of securing sharps in bins from inadvertent knocking over

### Categories of Healthcare Waste

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potentially Infectious</th>
<th>Non-Risk Waste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Domestic waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>Confidential material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>Medical equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharps</td>
<td>Potentially offensive material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discarded chemicals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagents and toxic flammable medicines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radioactive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waste segregation— it is vitally important that all healthcare workers know how to segregate waste into its appropriate stream.

Figure 1. Healthcare Waste-Basic Segregation and Packaging Schematic. Note: UN requirements may require the use of inner liners or receptacles for some wastes.
Types of Waste containers and indications for use

**Yellow Healthcare Risk Waste Bags**
- All blood stained or contaminated items (including dressings, bandages etc.)
- Suction Catheters, tubing and wound drains
- Incontinence waste from known or suspected enteric infections

**Yellow Rigid Boxes**
- Blood and blood administration sets
- Body fluids but not in bulk and must be solidified
- Disposable suction liners
- Redivac drains
- Drained histopathology waste (no formaldehyde)
- Sputum containers from known or suspected TB cases
- Clinical wastes from Lab permitted (no chemical residues permitted)

**Yellow Rigid Bin with Purple Lid**
- Small quantities of residual medicines
- Out of date medicines
- Controlled substances
- Pharmaceuticals left over after administration to patients
- Damaged stock from retail pharmacists
- No sharps or free liquids permitted

**Yellow Sharps Bin with red/blue Lid**
- Used sharps materials such as:
  - Needles, Syringes
  - Scalpels, Sharps tips of IV sets
  - Contaminated slides
  - Stitch cutters, Guide wires
  - Razors
  - Blood stained/contaminated glass

**Yellow Sharps Bin with Purple Lid**
- Needles, syringes, sharp instruments etc. that have been used for the administration of cytotoxic waste.
- Controlled drugs (discharge first)

**Yellow 30/60 litre rigid bin (black lid)**
- Non-autoclaved microbiological cultures
- Large / recognisable anatomical body parts
- Waste from known or suspected CJD cases
- Non-autoclaved large metal surgical objects e.g. hips
- Placenta in conjunction with additional leak proof containment
- No sharps or free liquids permitted

Note: Bags and containers should only be filled to agreed level. (2/3 for bags and 3/4 for containers) Tag tracking system should be used as well.