



SRISHTI

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Srishti Medical Waste Update
CAMPAIGN FOR PROPER MEDICAL WASTE DISPOSAL
August 98

Srishti welcomes the notification of the Bio- Medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The rules have finally seen the light of the day 3 years after the first draft rules were issued in April 1995. They represent the first legislation for bio-medical waste handling in the country. Srishti has been deeply involved in the medical waste issue, and is part of the Medwaste Action Network (MAN), a national coalition of groups working on the medical waste issue.

These rules may be called as the Bio Medical (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998 and they shall be conferred by sections 6,8 and 25 of the Environmental (Protection) Act 1986.

They shall be applicable to - "all persons who generate, collect, receive, store, transport, treat, recycle, dispose, or handle bio-medical waste in any form'. The Rules go on further to add ' It shall be the duty of every occupier of an institution generating bio- medical waste which includes a hospital, nursing home, clinic, dispensary, veterinary institution, animal house, pathological laboratory, blood bank to take all steps to ensure that such waste is handled without any adverse effect to human health and the environment".

The rules specify standards for the bio-medical waste treatment and disposal practices like incineration and environmentally friendly technologies like autoclaving and microwaving. It also allows sharing of existing waste treatment facilities or installing common facilities between hospitals.

Bio- Medical waste has been divided into 10 waste categories but a much simplified essentially 3 colour waste segregation system shall be followed.

Staggered implementation of the rules for treatment facilities like incineration/ autoclaving and microwave systems in the country which would extend upto the year 2002 giving sufficient time for the capacities to be build up in the area.

- A. Hospitals and nursing homes in towns with population of 30 lakhs and above- latest by 31st Dec 1999
- B. Hospitals and Nursing homes in towns with population of below 30 lakhs
 - a) With 500 beds and above - by 31st Dec 1999 or eariler
 - b) With 200 beds and above but less than 500 beds- by 31st Dec 2000 or earlier
 - c) With 50 beds and above but less than 200 beds- by 31st Dec 2001 or earlier
 - d) With less than 50 beds- by 31st Dec 2002 or earlier



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C. All other institutions generating bio- medical waste not included in A and B above - by 31st Dec 2002 or earlier.

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The rules clearly specify a ban on incineration of chlorinated plastics, which lead to the production of very toxic pollutants like dioxins and furans.

Powers have been defined to the government of each state and UT to establish a prescribed authority within their state which shall grant authorisation and help implement the rules.

A advisory committee to the government shall be formed in each state/UT. The committee shall include NGOs and other experts from the field which shall advise the government as and when required.

A National Guidelines Committee for the implementation of these Guidelines has been formed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

After the rules are out the Medical and administrative personnel must not approach the issue as a technology one but from an occupational/ worker safety as well as management perspective. It is a first step towards ensuring that health care institutions cure and not cause harm to the workers and the community. While health care institutions must do segregation and basic disinfection, the government must ensure the setting up of centralised or shared disposal facilities in each city.

In the wake of the new rules Srishti in collaboration with CPCB is organising a day long seminar on Hospital Waste which shall include discussions on the implementation part of the bio-medical waste rules.

Date: 8th Oct 1998

Venue: Gulmohar Hall, Indian Habitat Centre, N.Delhi.

In a major decision taken by the Delhi Government it has ordered for seven (7) medical waste treatment autoclaves for the major hospitals around the city. The steps taken by Delhi Government in going in for environmentally friendly technologies are commendable and must be taken up by other states also.



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As the rules are out we should judiciously practice them and not hurry up with a end of the pipe treatment technology but give more emphasis on a proper waste management system within the health care institute.

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Ravi Agarwal at Srishti***