

Clinical waste segregation for optometry settings



Colour	Waste stream	Optometric examples	Disposal method*	Hazards	Container	
Healthcare waste						
HAZARDOUS	Yellow 	Infectious or medical	Used fluorescein strips; or Sharps used for foreign body removal, needles and i-care probes (un-sheathed)	Clinical waste incineration (or alternative specialist treatment; England only)	Biological & chemical medical contamination	A rigid container may contain sharps
	Orange 	Known infectious waste	Infectious dressings or swabs and infected PPE	Clinical waste incineration or alternative treatment	Infection/medical contamination	Rigid container or orange bag (A rigid container may contain sharps)
	Purple 	Cytotoxic and Cytostatic waste	Chloramphenicol waste	Clinical waste incineration	Cytotoxicity	A rigid container may contain sharps
NON-HAZARDOUS	Blue 	Medicinal waste	Expired medicine, Minims, Used Minims	Clinical waste incineration (or alternative specialist treatment; England only)	Chemical & Environmental	Blue-lidded rigid container
	Yellow & Black 	Offensive/hygiene waste	Used non-infectious PPE, tonometer heads, I-care probes (in sheath) used contact lenses	Municipal incineration, EfW, Landfill (not recommended) or other authorised disposal/recovery	Unpleasant but not hazardous	Tiger stripe bags (No sharps)
Municipal waste						
NON-HAZARDOUS	Black 	Domestic/commercial trade waste	Packaging, business waste	Municipal incineration, EfW or Landfill		Black or clear bags
	White 	Recyclable waste	Empty boxes, device packaging, e.g. outer packaging of minims	Recycling. Paper, cardboard, plastics, & glass		White or clear bags**
	Light Blue 	Confidential waste	Patient data or commercially sensitive information	Shredded subsequently recycled		Bag or rigid bin (no specific colour)

Follow the guidance of your local waste contractor. The standardised colour coding should be followed in line with the official guidance documents; if not, the waste management will be non-compliant.

Waste producers must keep Waste Transfer Notes (non-hazardous waste) for >2 years and Consignment Notes (hazardous waste) for >3 years.

* The disposal method may vary between nations; consult WHTM 07-01 for Wales and HTM 07-01 for England.

** In Wales, from 06/04/2024, workplaces must separate recyclables, e.g. food, paper/card, glass, metal, plastics & cartons, textiles, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE).