

**County of Santa Clara
Department of Environmental Health
Hazardous Materials Compliance Division
Solid Waste Programs**



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Requirements for Treatment of Medical Waste by Autoclaving

1. Standard written Operating Procedures (SOP's per manufacturer) shall be established for use of each steam sterilizer that has been approved by the Department of Health. This shall include records of time, temperature, pressure, type of waste, type of container (sharps waste is not allowed to be autoclaved by the waste generator), closure of container, pattern of loading, water content (quantity), and maximum load capacity.
2. Recording or indicating thermometers shall be checked (observed) and the readings recorded during each complete cycle. This is to ensure that proper sterilization (the attainment of 250° F (121° C) for a minimum of 30 minutes) for each load is successful. Each load's quantity and/or density should be configured so that sterilization completely throughout the load is achieved. Thermometers shall be checked for calibration annually.
3. Heat sensitive tape or another method acceptable to the Enforcement Agency shall be used on every container for each load (i.e. red bag waste) that is processed to indicate the attainment of adequate sterilization.
4. The biological indicator Bacillus stearothermophilus or other indicator of adequate sterilization as approved by the Enforcement Agency shall be placed in the center of a load processed under manufacturer SOP's at least monthly to verify the attainment of adequate sterilization.
5. Records required within paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) shall be maintained for a period of not less than three years.

Reference: The Medical Waste Management Act, California Health & Safety Code, Chapter 8, Section 118215(a)(2), (paraphrased for clarification by LEA – Local Enforcement Agency: County of Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health)