

## Disposal of medicinal product waste – November 2008

The VMD has received a number of enquiries from veterinary practices concerning the disposal of waste medicinal products and their classification as hazardous waste.

The responsibility for the legislation and policy surrounding the correct disposal of waste lies with the Environment Agency (EA) in England and Wales, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in Scotland and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in Northern Ireland and **not** the VMD.

Special requirements apply when disposing of waste which has been classified as hazardous. Medicines with cytotoxic or cytostatic properties are classified as hazardous waste. However, the EA and other agencies may consider other medicines, which at first sight do not appear to be cytotoxic or cytostatic, to be hazardous if they have one or more of the following hazardous properties: Toxic (H6), Carcinogenic (H7), Mutagenic (H11) or Toxic for Reproduction (H10).

Information on the disposal of hazardous waste can be found on the websites of the respective agencies. For example information provided by the EA can be found at:

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste/1019330/1217981/1384307/>

The information provided includes the Technical Guidance WM2 which provides “interpretation of the definition and classification of hazardous waste”. This publication was prepared jointly by the EA, SEPA and NIEA.

If you wish to check whether a particular medicine can be classified as hazardous waste you should contact the appropriate environment agency:

EA at <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/contactus/>

or

SEPA at <http://www.sepa.org.uk/contact/index.htm>

or

NIEA at <http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/other-index/contacts.htm>

You may also find it helpful to refer to a document on the website of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain which provides interim guidance for the NHS hospital sector on hazardous waste. Appendix A of the document includes a list of hazardous medicines, but please note the list is taken from an American paper.

The document can be found at: <http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/hazwastehospghguid.pdf>

Finally you may also be interested to know that the BVA has some interim guidelines on the Members' pages of their website (<http://www.bva.co.uk/>) concerning hazardous waste.