HEALTHCARE WASTE STORAGE INSPECTION TEMPLATE

Healthcare Waste Storage Checklist

Inspect healthcare-waste storage from package receipt and secure holding through capacity, environmental controls, pickup readiness, contingency response, and corrective action.

FACILITY / LOCATION	AUDIT DATE	AUDITOR	APPROVER

Adapt waste-stream definitions, colour coding, holding-time and temperature limits, access controls, pickup frequencies, contractor requirements, and special-waste arrangements to current facility policy and applicable local requirements.

1. Audit setup, waste-storage scope, and governance

1 **Confirm the facility, audit date, operating status, auditor, healthcare-waste owner, infection-prevention contact, facilities contact, waste-contractor contact, and escalation contacts.** METADATA + SIGN-OFF

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Identify who can authorize emergency collection, storage closure, relocation, and contractor escalation.

2 **Define the temporary storage rooms, central waste store, satellite holding points, loading or pickup areas, refrigerated storage where applicable, and waste streams included in the inspection.** STORAGE SCOPE CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Record every storage point and special waste stream included or excluded from the inspection.

3 **Verify current procedures cover segregation, internal transport, storage conditions, maximum holding times, access control, spill response, pickup, treatment handoff, and contingency arrangements.** CRITICAL PROCEDURE VERIFICATION

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check version, approval, issue date, staff access, and alignment with current local requirements.

4 **Review recent missed collections, overflowing storage, leaks, spills, odour complaints, pest activity, damaged containers, unauthorized access, injuries, and overdue corrective actions.** PREVIOUS FINDINGS REVIEW

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use repeat events to target high-volume periods, weak collection routes, and recurring contractor issues.

5 **Confirm the facility has identified applicable legal or regulatory requirements for storage duration, temperature, labelling, security, transport, and special waste streams.** CRITICAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not assume one universal storage-time or colour-coding rule; confirm the applicable authority and facility standard.

6 **Capture the audit start time, storage location, operating conditions, approximate waste volume, and approved reference evidence without exposing unnecessary patient-identifying information.** CRITICAL LOCATION + TIMESTAMP + PHOTO

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Confirm the correct site and storage area before collecting evidence and approximate waste volumes.

2. Waste receipt, segregation integrity, and container closure

7 **Verify waste arriving at the storage area remains segregated according to the facility-approved waste streams and local colour-coding or labelling system.** CRITICAL SEGREGATION INTEGRITY CHECK

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Inspect incoming packages before they are placed into the store and contain damage immediately.

8 **Confirm bags, bins, sharps containers, boxes, drums, or other packages are securely closed before entering storage and are not leaking, torn, punctured, or visibly contaminated on the outside.** CRITICAL PACKAGE CONDITION + PHOTO

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not compress or manually re-sort hazardous waste to repair an unsafe package.

9 **Check sharps remain in approved puncture-resistant containers and are not mixed loose with bagged waste or other storage streams.** CRITICAL SHARPS CONTAINMENT CHECK

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Keep closed sharps containers upright and protected from crushing during storage.

10 **Verify infectious, pathological, pharmaceutical, chemical, radioactive, cytotoxic or other special wastes are routed to the designated storage control required by facility policy and applicable rules.** SPECIAL WASTE ROUTING

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Verify each special waste stream has the containment and downstream route required by facility policy.

11 **Confirm general or non-hazardous waste is kept separate from infectious and other hazardous healthcare waste throughout storage.** GENERAL / HAZARDOUS SEPARATION

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use physical separation, clear zones, labels, or dedicated containers so general waste cannot be mixed with hazardous streams.

12 **Check unidentified, incorrectly segregated, damaged, or rejected packages are isolated safely and corrected by trained personnel rather than opened or hand-sorted in the storage area.** REJECTED PACKAGE CONTROL

Compliant Needs attention Critical gap N/A

◇ Execution tip: Quarantine rejected packages safely and document who corrected the source problem.

3. Storage location, access control, security, and signage

13 **Verify the healthcare-waste storage area is dedicated or clearly controlled for its intended purpose and is separated from patient-care, public, food storage, and food-preparation areas.** CRITICAL · STORAGE LOCATION CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Confirm the storage location is not adjacent to food storage or preparation and is away from unnecessary public traffic.

14 **Confirm doors, gates, cages, or other barriers can be locked or otherwise secured against unauthorized access, scavenging, tampering, or entry by patients and visitors.** CRITICAL · ACCESS CONTROL

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Test locks, gates, or access controls during the inspection rather than relying only on policy.

15 **Check access is limited to trained and authorized staff and that keys, access cards, or other entry controls are managed consistently.** CRITICAL · AUTHORIZED ACCESS

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Review access lists or key control where the facility uses formal authorization.

16 **Verify entrance signage clearly identifies the storage function, relevant hazards, PPE or access requirements, and emergency contact information required by facility policy.** CRITICAL · HAZARD SIGNAGE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Ensure hazard and emergency information remains visible when the store is full or doors are open.

17 **Confirm the route from internal waste collection to storage does not require unnecessary movement through high-risk clean areas, food areas, or crowded public spaces.** CRITICAL · INTERNAL WASTE ROUTE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Observe an actual or simulated internal route and note crossings with clean or crowded areas.

18 **Check the pickup interface allows waste-collection vehicles or approved handlers to access the store without creating avoidable cross-traffic, unsafe lifting, or public exposure.** COLLECTION ACCESS

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check turning space, loading access, and safe transfer without blocking emergency routes.

4. Floors, drainage, ventilation, lighting, weather, and pest protection

19 **Inspect floors and lower wall surfaces for an impermeable, hard-standing, intact finish that can be cleaned and disinfected effectively.**

SURFACE CONDITION + PHOTO

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Look for cracks, absorbent surfaces, damaged joints, standing liquid, and difficult-to-clean edges.

20 **Verify drainage, where provided, is functional, does not create standing liquid, and is arranged to prevent uncontrolled discharge to watercourses or inappropriate areas.**

CRITICAL | DRAINAGE CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Confirm drains are clear and that spill or wash water cannot reach inappropriate areas.

21 **Confirm the storage area has adequate lighting and at least the ventilation required by facility design and applicable rules, with no persistent foul odour or stagnant conditions.**

VENTILATION + LIGHTING

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Investigate persistent odour, excessive heat, poor visibility, or stagnant air.

22 **Check the storage area and stored waste are protected from direct sun, rain, flooding, heat sources, and other weather conditions that could damage containers or accelerate decomposition.**

CRITICAL | WEATHER PROTECTION

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Inspect roof, doors, drainage, thresholds, and exterior exposure after severe weather where relevant.

23 **Inspect for evidence of rodents, insects, birds, animals, or other pests and confirm openings, doors, drains, and housekeeping controls limit pest access.**

PEST CONTROL

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Look for droppings, gnawing, insects, nesting, open gaps, and ineffective pest-proofing.

24 **Verify water for cleaning, handwashing arrangements where required, and suitable cleaning or decontamination equipment are readily available without contaminating clean supplies.**

CLEANING + WASHING FACILITIES

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Verify cleaning water, tools, PPE, waste bags, and handwashing supplies are actually available.

5. Storage capacity, stream separation, stacking, and physical containment

25 **Confirm storage capacity is appropriate for routine waste volume, expected peak generation, pickup frequency, and foreseeable short delays without causing overflow into corridors or unauthorized areas.** CRITICAL · CAPACITY CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Compare actual peak storage volume with safe usable capacity rather than nominal room size.

26 **Verify infectious and other hazardous waste is physically separated from general waste and that incompatible special wastes are stored according to the facility-approved arrangement.** CRITICAL · WASTE-STREAM SEPARATION

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Mark or label dedicated zones so incompatible or different-risk waste does not drift together.

27 **Check bags, bins, boxes, and containers are stable, upright where required, and stacked or positioned so they cannot fall, rupture, crush sharps containers, block doors, or obstruct ventilation.** CRITICAL · STACKING + STABILITY

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not allow stacked packages to crush lower containers or create unstable loads.

28 **Confirm waste is kept off unsuitable floors or surfaces where required, with sufficient spacing for inspection, cleaning, pest detection, and safe handling.** CRITICAL · SAFE STORAGE SPACING

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Maintain enough space to inspect, clean, and remove waste without dragging or climbing over packages.

29 **Verify liquid-containing waste is held in leak-resistant secondary containment or other approved controls where leakage could create an exposure or environmental risk.** CRITICAL · SECONDARY CONTAINMENT

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use secondary containment wherever a leak could expose staff or contaminate floors, drains, or adjacent waste.

30 **Check storage aisles, emergency exits, fire equipment, spill kits, handwashing points, and collection access remain unobstructed at all times.** AISLE + EMERGENCY ACCESS

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Keep fire equipment, spill kits, exits, wash points, and collection paths clear.

6. Holding time, temperature, accumulation, and pickup scheduling

31 **Verify each relevant waste stream is removed within the maximum storage time required by facility policy and applicable local regulation, with stricter controls used when temperature or waste characteristics require them.**

CRITICAL | HOLDING-TIME COMPLIANCE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Verify the oldest stored waste first and compare dates with the facility-specific maximum holding rule.

32 **Confirm the facility records generation, receipt, storage, pickup, or treatment dates where needed to demonstrate that holding-time limits are being met.**

DATE TRACEABILITY

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use consistent date or pickup records so overdue waste can be identified before it becomes an emergency.

33 **Check infectious or putrescible waste is not allowed to accumulate to a level that creates odour, leakage, pest, occupational, or environmental risk.**

CRITICAL | ACCUMULATION CONTROL

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Treat odour, leakage, pest attraction, or overflow as evidence that collection frequency or capacity is inadequate.

34 **Where refrigerated or temperature-controlled storage is required by local rules or waste type, verify the unit is functional, monitored, clean, and operated within the approved range.**

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Where cooling is required, retain temperature evidence and define the response to an excursion or equipment failure.

35 **Confirm routine pickup frequency matches actual waste generation and there is a defined escalation trigger when expected collection is delayed or capacity is approaching its safe limit.**

CRITICAL | PICKUP SCHEDULE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Set an escalation trigger before capacity is exhausted, not after overflow occurs.

36 **Review recent pickup performance, missed collections, contractor delays, weekend or holiday coverage, and any emergency collections required because routine capacity was exceeded.**

COLLECTION PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Review missed pickups by cause, duration, temporary control, and contractor follow-up.

7. Staff safety, PPE, hygiene, cleaning, and spill readiness

37 **Verify waste-storage staff receive role-appropriate training on hazards, safe lifting and handling, PPE, hand hygiene, sharps risk, spill response, security, and incident reporting.** STAFF TRAINING CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use practical scenarios for spills, dropped packages, exposed sharps, missed collections, and unauthorized access.

38 **Confirm task-appropriate PPE is available, correctly used, removed safely, cleaned or disposed of as applicable, and replaced when damaged or contaminated.** CRITICAL PPE COMPLIANCE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check PPE condition, size, availability, removal, cleaning, and disposal - not only whether PPE is listed in the SOP.

39 **Check a handwashing basin with running water and soap, or other facility-approved hand-hygiene arrangement, is accessible to staff working in or around the storage area where required.** CRITICAL HAND HYGIENE ACCESS

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Confirm staff can perform hand hygiene immediately after waste handling and before entering clean areas.

40 **Verify the storage area is cleaned on a defined schedule and immediately after contamination, with documented responsibilities, suitable products, and safe cleaning methods.** CRITICAL CLEANING SCHEDULE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Verify the store is cleaned after contamination and on the facility-defined routine frequency.

41 **Confirm spill containment materials, tools, warning signs, absorbent materials, disinfectant or chemical-specific controls, and waste bags or containers are conveniently available and within serviceable condition.** SPILL KIT READINESS

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Inspect expiry, quantity, location, and suitability of spill materials for the waste streams present.

42 **Review whether spills, leaks, dropped containers, sharps exposures, chemical releases, or staff injuries are reported, contained, medically assessed where needed, investigated, and followed to closure.** CRITICAL INCIDENT + EXPOSURE RESPONSE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Trace one recent incident from first containment through staff assessment, cleanup, reporting, and closure.

8. Records, traceability, collection handoff, and contractor controls

43 **Verify stored waste can be traced to the relevant facility, department, waste stream, container or batch, and collection or treatment record to the extent required by facility or regulatory rules.**

CRITICAL | TRACEABILITY CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use source identification and collection records to trace sampled waste from storage to the approved next step.

44 **Check weight, volume, container counts, pickup records, manifests, consignment notes, transfer documents, or electronic records are complete and reconciled where required.**

CRITICAL | MANIFEST / RECORD REVIEW

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Reconcile quantities or container counts where records are required and investigate unexplained differences.

45 **Confirm external waste collectors, transporters, treatment providers, or disposal contractors are approved and currently authorized for the waste streams they handle.**

CRITICAL | CONTRACTOR APPROVAL

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Check current licences, approvals, scope, and service restrictions for contractors where applicable.

46 **Verify waste is released only to the approved collection route and that handoff records include date, time, waste type, quantity or container count, responsible persons, and exceptions where required.**

CRITICAL | COLLECTION HANDOFF RECORD

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Retain the responsible persons, date, time, waste type, quantity, and exceptions at handoff when required.

47 **Check collection vehicles, carts, or transfer containers presented at the storage area are suitable, closed or covered as required, clean enough for use, and do not compromise segregation during loading.**

COLLECTION VEHICLE CHECK

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Inspect the vehicle or cart before loading if poor condition could compromise containment or segregation.

48 **Review rejected loads, damaged packages, missing documentation, contractor non-conformances, treatment failures, or other downstream issues and confirm follow-up actions are documented.**

CRITICAL | DOWNSTREAM ISSUE FOLLOW-UP

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Treat rejected loads and missing documents as operational findings, not just contractor paperwork issues.

9. Contingency readiness, incidents, capacity loss, and emergency storage

49 **Verify the facility has a documented contingency for missed pickups, sudden waste surges, storage-area closure, refrigeration failure, flooding, fire, pest infestation, security breach, and other foreseeable disruptions.** CONTINGENCY PLAN REVIEW

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Include pickup delays, storage closure, refrigeration loss, flood, fire, pest infestation, and sudden waste surges.

50 **Confirm alternative storage capacity or an emergency collection route is identified, secure, appropriately segregated, and capable of meeting the same core safety controls before it is needed.** CRITICAL | ALTERNATIVE STORAGE READINESS

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Confirm the alternative site is secure and suitable before an emergency rather than improvising during one.

51 **Check staff know who can authorize emergency relocation, additional collections, temporary restrictions, contractor escalation, or closure of an unsafe storage area.** EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Make escalation authority explicit for urgent collection, relocation, or suspension of unsafe storage.

52 **Verify damaged, leaking, contaminated, or otherwise unsafe packages can be overpacked or secondarily contained without staff manually re-sorting hazardous contents.** OVERPACKING / CONTAINMENT

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Overpack or secondarily contain without manually sorting or reopening hazardous contents.

53 **Confirm emergency incidents are recorded with time, affected waste, exposure or environmental risk, interim controls, notifications, cleanup, disposal decision, and reopening criteria.** INCIDENT RECORD

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Capture the affected waste, time, risk, notifications, interim controls, cleanup, and reopening criteria.

54 **Review at least one recent contingency event or drill and verify lessons learned were converted into equipment, capacity, contractor, training, or procedure improvements.** DRILL + LESSONS LEARNED

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use drills and real events to improve capacity, contractor response, equipment, and staff training.

10. Findings, corrective actions, verification, and sign-off

55 **Calculate the overall healthcare-waste storage compliance result and summarize critical storage failures, repeated gaps, capacity concerns, affected waste streams, and unresolved contractor issues.** AUDIT SCORE + SUMMARY

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Separate immediate safety risk from underlying layout, capacity, contractor, infrastructure, or governance causes.

56 **Create immediate containment for every leak, exposed sharp, unsafe accumulation, unauthorized access, segregation failure, pest or weather exposure, blocked route, or other condition presenting immediate risk.** CRITICAL | CRITICAL CONTAINMENT ACTION

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Record what was isolated, secured, overpacked, collected urgently, cleaned, or restricted before normal work continued.

57 **Assign each finding an owner, priority, due date, root-cause requirement, corrective action, and objective closure-evidence rule.** CRITICAL | CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNMENT

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Use short deadlines for immediate risk and realistic deadlines for permanent prevention.

58 **Correct system causes such as insufficient storage capacity, poor layout, unsuitable surfaces, missing security, inadequate pickup frequency, weak contractor performance, or unclear storage-time controls.** CRITICAL | SYSTEM CORRECTIVE ACTION

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Fix system causes such as capacity, layout, access, surfaces, pickup frequency, and contractor performance rather than relying only on reminders.

59 **Verify closure through repeat inspection, photos, cleaning records, repaired surfaces, access-control evidence, pickup records, capacity changes, training proof, or a focused re-audit.** CRITICAL | CLOSURE VERIFICATION

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Do not close an action based only on a written comment; verify the condition or control directly.

60 **Record the final audit decision, remaining restrictions, next review date, auditor, waste or facility manager approval, date, time, and signature.** CRITICAL | APPROVAL + SIGNATURE

Compliant | Needs attention | Critical gap | N/A

◇ Execution tip: Keep unsafe storage areas or waste streams restricted until all release conditions are met.