

## **Section 6**

### **Dispose of Waste Safely**



This section describes how to:

- Dispose of liquid waste and patient excreta in an isolated latrine or toilet.
- Use an incinerator to burn contaminated waste.
- Use a pit to burn contaminated waste.
- Maintain security of the disposal site.

## Section 6      Dispose of Waste Safely

Direct, unprotected contact during disposal of infectious waste can result in accidental transmission of VHF. For this reason, all contaminated waste produced in the care of the VHF patient must be disposed of safely. All non-reusable items should be destroyed so they cannot be used again. Burning should be carried out at least daily.

### 6.1 What Needs Disposal

When VHF is suspected, disinfect and dispose of:

- Infectious blood and other body fluids such as urine, faeces, and vomitus
- Disposable needles and syringes and disposable or non-reusable protective clothing
- Treatment materials and dressings
- Non-reusable gloves
- Laboratory supplies and biological samples
- Used disinfectants.

**Recommended Disposal Methods:** Liquid waste, including patient excreta, can be disposed of in an isolated latrine or toilet set aside for VHF cases. Burning is the recommended method for disposal of other VHF-contaminated waste. A safe and inexpensive disposal system can be made by using an incinerator or a pit for burning.

- A latrine or toilet that joins the patient's isolation room can be used to receive the disinfected bedpan contents from the VHF patient. The latrine or toilet should be isolated. Access should be restricted to health facility staff trained to work in the VHF isolation area. Isolating the patient area is described in Section 3.5.

## **6.2 Select Staff to Supervise Waste Disposal and Burning**

Select a person with authority who will:

- Oversee all the disposal procedures, including preparation of the incinerator and pit.
- Train and supervise the staff who carry out waste disposal.
- Make a schedule for collecting and burning disposable waste.
- Supervise the collection and burning to make sure it is carried out safely.

## **6.3 Train and Supervise Staff to Carry Out Waste Disposal**

The cleaning staff who do the disposal tasks should understand the purpose of safe disposal, know how to wear protective clothing, and know clearly how to carry out waste disposal safely.

After the cleaning staff is selected:

1. Describe the risks of VHF transmission. Explain that health facility staff who carry out waste disposal should wear protective clothing including a plastic apron and at least two pairs of gloves. Wear thick gloves as the outer pair of gloves.
2. Describe the disposal procedures that cleaning staff will carry out:
  - Bring the containers of infectious waste from the isolation and cleaning areas to the disposal site. Discard the items in the incinerator or burning pit.
  - Pour fuel on the waste in the incinerator or over the pit. Light the fire.

## 6.4 Select Site for Burning VHF-Contaminated Waste

Select a burning site on the health facility grounds. It should be located away from the normal traffic flow. To help maintain security and prevent unauthorized access, the site should not be in public view or in an area where it will attract a crowd. The ash from the burning is not infectious, and it can be placed in a pit and buried.

## 6.5 Use Incinerator to Burn VHF-Contaminated Waste

If an incinerator is available on the health facility's grounds, and it can be set aside for VHF-contaminated waste, use diesel fuel during burning to make sure all the waste is completely destroyed.

If no incinerator is available, make one from an empty 220-litre (55-gallon) oil or fuel drum.

### 1. Gather the following supplies:

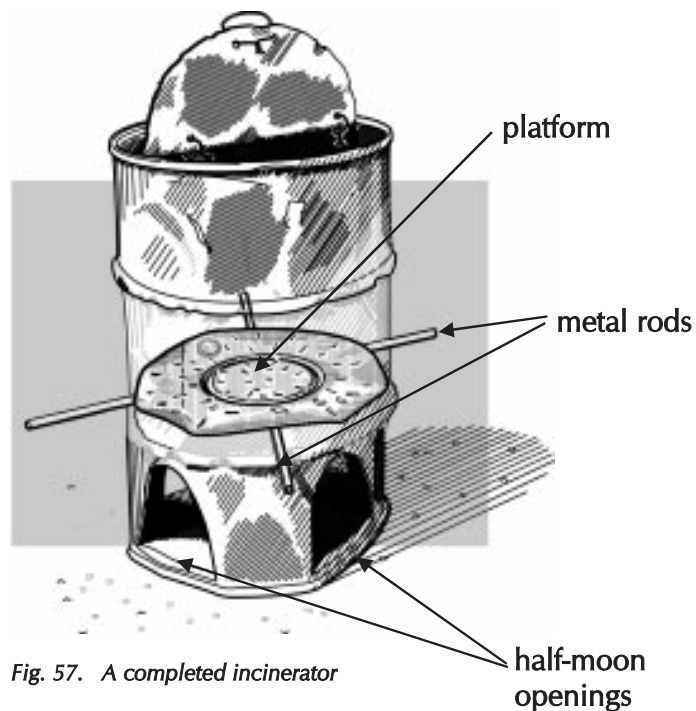
- 220-litre (55-gallon) drum
- Chisel or other sharp instrument (an awl, for example) to cut metal
- Hammer
- 0.5 mm or 1.0 mm metal wire
- The piece cut out from the top of the drum or a wire screen or grill about 1 cm thick
- Metal rods or bars 4 cm or 5 cm x 2 cm.



Fig. 54. A 220-litre drum

2. Cut open the drum by removing the top in one piece. Save the top cutaway piece.
3. Hammer the edges of the drum so they are not sharp.
4. Cut three half-moon openings just below the open end of the drum.

9. Cut away half of the bottom of the drum (which is now the top of the incinerator and is facing up). Attach the wire loops to the cutaway half. Attach another loop for a handle to open the trap door. Items to be burned will be put in the incinerator through this door.
10. Place the platform you made in Step 7 inside the drum on top of the rods. Replace the incinerator if, as a result of the heat, large holes appear in the sides.



*Fig. 57. A completed incinerator*

***To burn waste in the incinerator:***

1. Place the infectious waste inside the top of the drum. Soak the waste in one litre of fuel.
2. Light the fire carefully.
3. Watch the fire and frequently mix the waste with the metal bars to be sure all of the waste is burned.
4. When the fire has gone out, empty the ashes into a pit.

## **6.7 Take Steps to Ensure Security of Burning Site**

Maintain the security of the burning site to limit access to contaminated items. This is important since children could be tempted to pick up the interesting waste materials and use them for toys. Dogs, cats, and other animals may carry items beyond the health facility boundaries.

Tie a rope around the disposal area. Hang warning signs from the rope that tell people this is a dangerous area. Also station a guard to prevent unauthorized access to the disposal area.

Never leave unburned waste in the incinerator or the pit.