

Biomedical Waste Generation and
Incineration from Hospitals in
Rhode Island

by

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1.0 ABSTRACT

The hypothesis that disposal of biomedical waste in Rhode Island is currently resulting in environmental degradation is evaluated. Waste disposal practices at hospitals within the State were investigated. Results concerning environmental impact are compared to those from other facilities. Significant findings include the waste disposal rates from fifteen facilities, emissions test data from one controlled air incinerator and recommendations for regulatory agencies. Key findings are that emissions from biomedical waste incinerators have significant potential health impacts to a captive population. Infection precautions are driving the waste generation rate to higher levels. Arguments are made for source reduction and separation of recyclable waste. Further discussion concludes that much of the biomedical waste can be safely disposed of in landfills and or mixed with municipal solid waste for incineration at well controlled regional systems. Policy issues addressed include regional vs. on site incineration and recommendations to amend air pollution control regulations.