

Introduction Medical waste is a subset of wastes generated at health care facilities, such as hospitals, physicians' offices, dental practices, blood banks, and veterinary hospitals/clinics, as well as medical research facilities and laboratories. We conducted a concept comparison project in the ORs of two large medical centers in Bethesda, Maryland, and Washington, DC, to evaluate the effects of using reusable surgical basins, gowns, and table and Mayo stand covers in place of disposable products. Survey results indicated that surgeons and surgical technologists found the reusable products to be preferable to the disposable products currently in use. Generally, medical waste is healthcare waste that that may be contaminated by blood, body fluids or other potentially infectious materials and is often referred to as regulated medical waste. Medical waste is a necessary by-product of any hospital environment; however, the majority of regulated medical waste is produced in the OR from the use of disposable surgical supplies (e.g., drapes, gowns, basins, gloves, sponges). In addition, using reusable products provided a means to decrease regulated medical waste generated in the OR by an average of 65% as well as reduce the cost of waste disposal.