

Clinical Waste Bag Audit Trail – Options

This document contains information on the advantages, disadvantages, costs and benefits of all known methods for sealing and auditing clinical waste.

Pre-Printed Labels



Using tag or knotting to seal the bag and applying a pre-printed label to create the audit trail.

The label must include details of the trust and department of issue.

Cost: Tag plus label plus additional time to apply the label

Benefit: Low cost

Disadvantages: Audit trail is dependent upon the quality of the label. If this becomes detached from the bag then the audit trail is lost.

If a label has become separated from the bag, the waste management company should not handle it.

Someone has to apply the label.



Writing Information on the Bag



Using a tag or knotting to seal the bag and then writing the information onto the bag to create the audit trail

The hand written information must include the trust and department of origin.

Cost: Tag plus additional time to write the information.

Benefit: Lowest cost.

Disadvantages: The audit trail is dependent upon the correct information being written on the bag.

The audit trail is dependent upon the legibility of handwritten information.

The audit trail is dependent upon the quality of the writing implement used to apply the information.

The correct pen should be used to ensure good contrast that is not easily wiped off the bag



Pre-Printed Tape



Using pre-printed tape to seal the bag and to create the audit trail. This requires a customised product for each department within the trust, e.g. if there are 500 departments, each department will need to carry a stock, and any regional stores will have to carry stock (MOQ purchase quantity is 20 rolls).

Each roll will be printed with the trust details and the department of origin.

Cost: This will depend on how accurately operatives follow the recommended practices of the tape supplier who suggest 2 to 3 turns of tape per closure.

In reality the number of turns is exceeded and the tape is used for other purposes.

Benefit: Every bag is customised with the department and trust information, so a formal audit trail is generated.

Disadvantages: The number of stock items for a trust can be excessive, and if this is applied regionally or nationally, the number of stock codes increases proportionately.

Tape is more difficult to apply than tags.

Tape can be used for other purposes.



Printed Clinical Waste Seal



Using a tag to seal the bag which has the trust identification and a sequential serial number printed on the tag or strap.

This is the most widely used concept throughout the United Kingdom.

The audit trail is created by having the trust identification and contact telephone number printed on the first two lines and a unique serial number on the third line – this gives every clinical waste bag a unique identity.

The tags are supplied in cartons of 5,000 or 10,000 and bags of 100, 500 or 1,000, the trust will record where each bag of tags are issued to by the serial numbers, date and location. In the event of a problem, the clinical waste can firstly be tracked back to the trust, who can then refer to the issue record to identify which department it was issued to.

Cost: Price per 1,000 depending upon volume

Benefit: Providing the clinical waste bag is sealed there is an audit trail.

Each clinical waste bag is uniquely identified.

Possibility of access 24/7 via a supplier web site portal, which can be accessed via a user name and password, then entering the bag serial number – the software will then report the trust and department of issue, together with date of issue.

Talisman Taliloc product is supplied in mats of 10, so issue quantity can be less than bag quantity.

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Time savings when applying, compared to tape, labels and hand writing.

Each bag of tags will have the batch of serial numbers printed twice, the second set being on a peel off label, which can be easily removed, for entry into a register – this eliminates possible error due to hand written information.

All cartons can be bar coded to allow automated recording of serial number batches when issued from a central distribution centre.

Disadvantage: The trust is responsible for recording the issuing of the tags and recording where each batch of serial numbers are issued.

