

Purpose and Scope

This policy provides the guidelines for waste management. The disposal of waste must be conducted in a manner which protects people and the environment. Correct and efficient waste management reduces environmental impact and minimises exposure to infection and disease.

This policy applies to all participants, staff and volunteers.

The Operations Manager is responsible for implementation of this policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

Cahoots works to ensure each participant, worker and any other person attending a Cahoots service is protected from harm as a result of exposure to waste, infectious or hazardous substances generated during the delivery of support.

Cahoots is committed to the safety and health of its participants and workforce and is therefore compliant with all legislative requirements for appropriate waste management.

Definitions

Biohazard means a biological substance that may pose a threat to the health of a person.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) means equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses i.e., gloves, face masks, goggles, gowns/aprons.

Sharps means a general term categorising (but not limited to) needles, lancets, etc that are used to penetrate the skin.

Participant means a person accessing a Cahoots service, including all potential, current and previous participants of Cahoots.

Worker means a person who carries out work in any capacity for Cahoots, including work as an employee, a contractor or sub-contractor or an intern, trainee, or volunteer.

Waste Management

Waste generated in the delivery of Cahoots services can be categorised as general, recyclable, clinical, pharmaceutical, sensitive and E-waste.

Cahoots takes all necessary precautions to minimise potential hazards and ensures that waste is managed safely and legally by:

1. Separating and managing waste as categorised.
2. Ensuring clinical waste is segregated, packaged, labelled and stored appropriately.
3. Training staff in the safe and appropriate handling of waste or hazardous substances, including the use of PPE or any other clothing required to protect the worker.
4. Using licensed contractors for the collection and transport of waste.

General Waste Disposal

General waste is any waste not recyclable or categorised in other waste categories.

General waste constitutes the bulk of waste generated by Cahoots, which is no more of a public health risk than standard domestic waste.

Incontinence pads, disposable nappies and PPE may be treated as general waste unless the material has come from an infectious person, is visibly blood stained, or is disposed of in large quantities. In these cases, it must be treated as clinical waste.

General waste bins are readily available at all Cahoots service locations and staff are provided with plastic rubbish bags for use during services. General waste is to be bagged before disposal and internal bins are to be emptied when $\frac{3}{4}$ full, or at a minimum, daily.

All general waste is to be placed in general waste bins at service locations for disposal by licensed contractors.

General waste is not suitable for:

- clinical waste or sharps due to the risk of injury or infection.
- disposal of sensitive information, as it is insecure and could result in a data breach.

Recyclable Waste Disposal

Wherever possible, recyclable products should always be recycled to reduce general waste. Where recyclable bins are available, staff will separate recyclables from general waste.

This includes:

- kerbside collection (local government yellow lid bins, where available) or a waste management recycling service for paper, cardboard, glass jars and bottles, PET bottles and containers etc.
- toner cartridge collection services for used toner cartridges from photocopiers and laser printers.
- mobile phone recycling services.
- E-waste collection services for computers, TVs, household appliances etc.
- battery recycling services.

Clinical Waste Disposal

Clinical waste is waste generated in a clinical or similar setting that has the potential to cause disease or injury. Generally, Cahoots does not produce clinical waste.

Sharps: Cahoots staff do not administer injections. On occasion, splinter removers or disposable razors may be utilised, and these are to be managed as sharps. A sharps container is available in each first aid kit. When the container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full it is to be taken to a pharmacy for disposal and replaced.

Potentially infectious material: Cahoots services generally do not generate waste heavily soiled with blood or bodily fluids. Where waste is soiled with blood or potentially infectious matter, it is to be double bagged, sealed securely and disposed of in the external general waste bins.

Pharmaceutical Waste

Pharmaceutical waste includes expired or unused medications. All medication which is unused, no longer required, or expired at the conclusion of a Cahoots service is to be returned to the participant and their support network for disposal. This includes tablet medication that has been dropped or spilled, that has been collected and placed in an envelope for return.

Personal and Sensitive Information Waste

To reduce risks of data breach (where personal information is accessed by someone unauthorised), printed material containing personal or confidential information must not be disposed of in general waste.

Paper waste and printed material containing personal or confidential information must be either shredded or disposed of in the secure paper recycling bins at Cahoots head office for collection by a secure document destruction service.

Computers, computer storage, mobile phones, media and USB memory keys used to store personal information should be disposed of by a qualified secure E-waste service.

E-waste

If placed in general waste, E-waste can be dangerous and harmful to the environment, while increasing the risks of data breach.

E-waste should be disposed of using an E-waste disposal or destruction service. This includes mobile phones, computers, storage devices, media and USB memory sticks used to store personal or confidential information.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Cahoots provides hand hygiene facilities for workers and promotes regular hygiene procedures which are compliant with the Commonwealth and Western Australian Department of Health.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Workers must use appropriate PPE when necessary. Cahoots will provide the necessary protective equipment to all workers who deal with waste and hazardous substances.

Staff Training

Cahoots will undertake the training of all workers who are involved in handling waste or hazardous substances.

This training will include:

- Hand hygiene.
- Safe handling of hazardous materials and substances such as:
 - Blood and bodily fluids.
 - Potentially infectious material i.e., used dressings.
 - Hazardous substances, e.g., Chemicals, toxic or corrosive substances, bloodborne pathogens, biological hazards, chemical exposures, respiratory hazards, sharps injuries.
 - Safe disposal of sharps in provided sharps container.
- Use of personal protective equipment.
- Clothing requirements, e.g., shoes, masks, aprons etc.
- Removal or mitigation of the hazard and inform supervisor of any problems/issues.
- First aid and treatment for bloody and body fluid exposure.
- Emergency response procedures and drills.

Incident Reporting

Any incident involving infectious material, body substances or hazardous substances are reportable, in line with the process outlined in the Incident Management Policy and Procedure.

Workers are to:

- Report incident or hazard to the Facilitator; and
- Complete the online Incident Report Form accessible via QR code.

Once the form has been lodged, it will be added to the Incident Register and investigated by the Service Coordinator.

Where continuous quality improvement is identified, the Service Coordinator will add to the Quality and Risk Action Plan.

Waste Removal Records

Any waste produced that is not disposed of via general or recyclable waste disposal is to be reported via an Incident Report, added to the Incident Register and investigated by the Service Coordinator.

Where continuous quality improvement is identified, the Service Coordinator will add to the Quality and Risk Action Plan.

Emergency Plan

Where issues or accidents occur relating to clinical waste or hazardous substances, the following emergency evacuation plan is to be implemented.

Action Plan:

- Remain calm.
- Evacuate Cahoots Team Members, participants and visitors from the building or location to the muster point or, if necessary, another safe assembly area.
- Facilitator to check that all areas have been cleared. Do not re-enter building or leave the assembly area until given the "all clear" by emergency services.
- Contact emergency services by dialling "000", if required.
- Follow instructions of emergency services, if on site.
- Facilitator to undertake head count of Cahoots Team Members and participants.
- Facilitator to contact Cahoots On-Call Staff.
- Cahoots On-Call Staff to contact Cahoots Operations Staff and participant support network.

Post Emergency - Report, Support and Review

Following an emergency, the Operations Manager will refer to the Emergency and Disaster Management Plan for the next steps.

In summary, the Operations Manager will ensure the relevant staff have:

- Completed incident reporting by the staff involved in the incident using the online Incident Report Form accessible via QR code.
- Offered EAP counselling or medical treatment to staff and/or participants.
- Reviewed and evaluated the incident response to identify Continuous Improvement Activities.

Communication

This policy will be communicated in an appropriate way to:

- Participants and their support networks through Cahoots e-newsletter, website, intake process, easy to read flyers and accessible on request.
- Staff and volunteers through inductions, professional development and staff meetings.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with participants and their support networks together with staff and volunteers.

This policy is not intended to be a static document and Cahoots commits to its ongoing development as part of continuous quality improvement, and as policy and legislation changes dictate.

Reference and Related Documents

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act)
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- Government of Western Australia Department of Health
- Australian Government Department of Health
- Work Health and Safety Act 2022
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 3.2
- Cahoots Emergency and Disaster Management Plan
- Cahoots Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- Cahoots Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Cahoots Risk Management Policy
- Cahoots Facilitator and Support Worker Training Policy

Versions

No.	Approval Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	18/06/2023	Policy created, NDIS Quality Standards

Owner	Approver	Next Review
Operations Manger	CEO	April 2025