

17 August 2021

Ph: (09) 630-9943 ext: 22342
Email: ailsac@adhb.govt.nz

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Re: Official Information Act request – PPE waste

I refer to your Official Information Act request received dated 20 July 2021 requesting the following information:

I'm hoping to get some information and comment from Auckland DHB about how much PPE (approximately) its hospitals had received and disposed of during the pandemic. Also, a breakdown of how that PPE is disposed of in the hospital.

The story is looking at how much PPE waste the pandemic has created.

Auckland DHB is continually looking at ways in which we can improve and operate as a more sustainable healthcare provider.

In 2015 we started an ambitious sustainability programme with the aim of reducing our landfill waste to zero by 2040. Other areas of focus include reducing single use plastics and packaging and working with key suppliers to drive more repurposing of end-of-life products. In 2020, about 25% of our waste was recycled which was around 1,200 tonnes.

PPE is not recycled due to infection control measures.

The below table shows a breakdown of PPE disposed of by financial year, number of items and weight. We have disposed of over 31 tonnes of PPE in total during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years.

Category	2019/2020	2020/2021	Total 2019/2021	Weight	Total Weight	Convert to KG
Mask	1,235,670	2,267,714	3,503,384	2 g	7006768 g	7,006.00
Eye Protection	45,617	115,128	160,745	50 g	8037250 g	8,037.25
Protective Clothin	423,837	927,270	1,351,107	2.5 g	3377767.5 g	3,377.76
Gloves	22,394,980	20,083,810	42,478,790	3 g	12743637 g	12,743.00

Breakdown of how PPE is disposed of in the hospital:

- PPE would be disposed of in the appropriate bin in the hospital.
- The majority of our PPE is used in environments that are reasonably expected to be infectious and contain pathogens, and therefore is safely disposed of in a yellow infectious waste bin. It is then taken to a waste processing plant where it is autoclaved (a method of sterilization) before it goes to landfill.
- Sometimes PPE items used in an environment not expected to be infectious are disposed of in the general waste bins onsite which go to landfill, for example, a mask worn by a patient, visitor or staff member en route to hospital or in public areas of the hospital.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive of Te Toka Tumai (Auckland District Health Board)