

UNDP GHANA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

HEALTH CARE WASTE MANAGEMENT



AREAS OF SUPPORT

1. Policy support to National COVID-19 Management Team for integrating health care waste management in national COVID-19 response.
2. Monitoring and enforcement of Infection Prevention and Control protocols in health facilities.
3. Capacity building on health care waste management in health facilities and isolation centres.
4. Provision of hand sanitizers and logistics to frontline facilities.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR

Policy level support

Two policy briefs have been developed and shared with the National COVID-19 Management team. They outline why it is important to ensure effective health care waste management in the response to COVID-19 and provide a more detailed explanation of the processes (and related SOPs) that need to be followed to effectively manage infectious waste for infection prevention.



UNDP Ghana -
MOH Brief 1 on HCV



UNDP Ghana -
MOH Brief 2 on HCV

UNDP has also convened meetings of the Waste Recovery Platform to discuss the impact of COVID-19 in the waste management sector, agree on actions to address these challenges and mobilize stakeholders to support their implementation.

Monitoring, enforcement and training

The Health Facilities Regulatory Authority (HeFRA), an agency under Ghana's Ministry of Health, has been supported to carry out monitoring visits to 800 health facilities in Greater Accra and Ashanti regions to verify their compliance with Infection Prevention and Control protocols. They have been joined by experts from Accra School of Hygiene who are providing on the spot training for health personnel on how to discharge effective practices on health care waste management based on gaps identified during the monitoring.

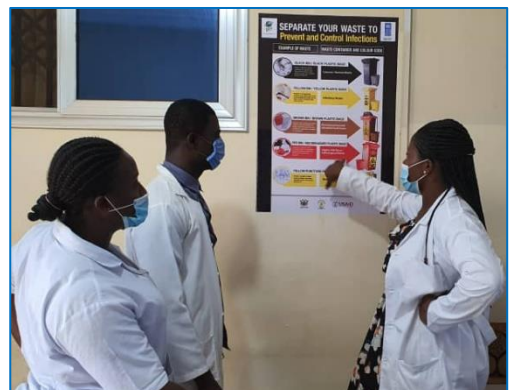
ENSURING EFFECTIVE HEALTH CARE WASTE MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The outbreak of COVID-19 as a global pandemic has overstretched health systems in affected countries. In a normal health delivery situation, most of the waste generated in health care facilities is comparable to domestic waste and usually called "non-hazardous" or "general health care waste". Only about 25% is considered as hazardous requiring special treatment processes to reduce risks of infection to patients, hospital staff and nearby communities, as well as pollution of the environment. This scenario is changing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as according to [WHO \(2020\)](#), materials and general waste contaminated with the COVID-19 virus from an infected patient is considered as infectious waste, therefore requiring that safety measures for infectious waste are applied. Experiences from China and other countries show that the pandemic and its treatment processes have also led to an increase in volumes of health care waste as well as elevated risk to workers. This therefore requires the prioritisation of effective health care waste management in service delivery during this period.

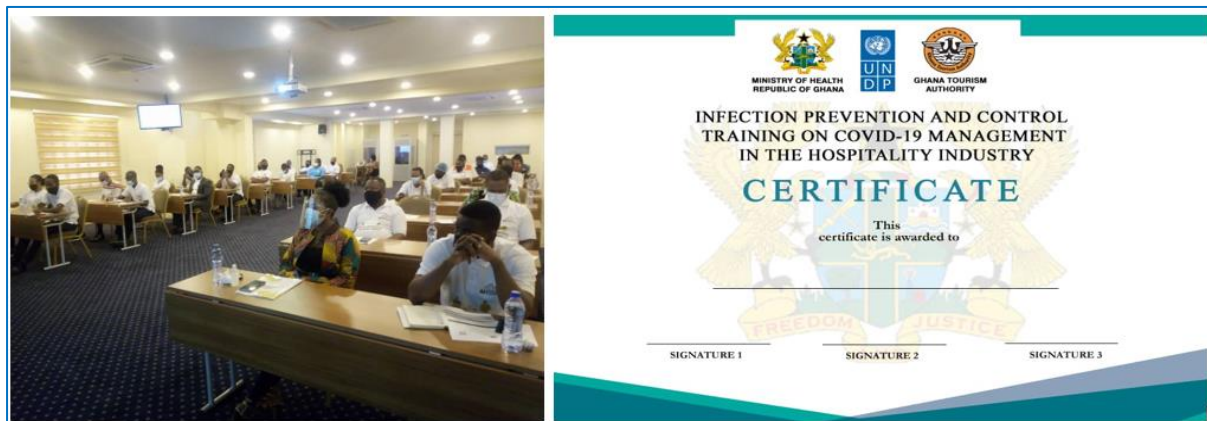
According to [WHO \(2020\)](#), COVID-19 virus is transmitted through exposure to respiratory droplets and contact with infected person. However, droplets may also land on surfaces where the virus could remain viable; thus, the immediate environment of an infected individual can serve as a source of transmission. This makes the wards and quarantine stations where such patients are kept are potentially infectious areas, with materials used also potentially infectious.

Currently, the use of PPEs and other consumables which are mostly single use items in providing care for COVID-19 patients has increased. For instance, the use of gloves, face masks, cotton and needles for injections and laboratory testing of the cases has caused a sky-rocketing increase in potentially hazardous waste from these medical procedures. Due to the means of transmission (droplets from spluttering or sneezing, coughing or coming into contact with hard surfaces where virus are deposited), this waste could easily be contaminated either by health care providers, patients or caregivers, thereby exposing this same group of persons and nearby communities to risks of infection if appropriate processes for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Health care waste management (HCWM) are not followed.

Effectiveness in HCWM in this case includes observing proper waste segregation at source (using the right bins and colours), observing personal protection protocols during waste transportation from wards, and finally, the treatment/sterilisation of infectious waste before going to a landfill OR incinerating under acceptable temperatures (850 degrees and above).



Under this theme, the National Quality Unit of the Ministry of Health is being supported to train staff of twenty hotels being used as quarantine and isolation centres in the Greater Accra Region on how to effectively manage their waste to prevent infections. The National Tourism Authority has been engaged to mainstream this subject in their health and safety requirements for tourist facilities across the country.



Provision of hand sanitizers and logistics

UNDP has supported the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital to produce hand sanitizers to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection in health facilities in Ghana. Through this intervention, UNDP has donated 11,150 litres of hand sanitizers (5,000 pieces of 230ml bottles and 2,000 pieces of 5 litres refill bottles, with 162 dispensers) to the Ministry of Health to support 21 key facilities playing leading roles in the testing and management of COVID-19 cases across the country. UNDP is also procuring consumables and personal protective equipment (PPEs) for the Ministry



of Health to promote effective management of medical waste in the selected health facilities. These include 200 big infectious waste bins; 200 small infectious waste bins; 40,000 small infectious waste bags; 13,000 large infectious waste bags; 1,000 sharps containers; 1,000 safety masks; 200 safety goggles and 100 working gloves.

AREAS OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT (RESOURCES TO BE MOBILIZED)

Monitoring, enforcement and training

- Expand monitoring, enforcement, and training programme to at least 800 additional health facilities in other regions of Ghana. *Estimated budget: USD 100,000.*
- Expand training for isolation and quarantine facilities programme to at least 60 hotels. *Estimated budget: USD 85,000.*

Provision of hand sanitizers and logistics

- Production and supply of additional hand sanitisers to key health facilities involved in testing and management of COVID-19 cases. *Estimated budget: USD 100,000.*
- Procurement of HCWM PPEs and consumables for key health facilities involved in testing and management of covid-19 cases. *Estimated budget: USD 50,000.*