

17 December 2018

Thank you for your request dated 23 November 2018 requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982, regarding radioactive waste. You requested:

1. Does the DHB record the amount of radioactive waste being produced/as a by-product of operating radiology/diagnostic machines including but not exclusive to X-rays, PET and CT scans and radiation therapy?
2. How much radioactive waste is being produced at the DHB per year?
3. How and where is this radioactive waste disposed of?

The information pertaining to your request is below.

Question 1:

Does the DHB record the amount of radioactive waste being produced/as a by-product of operating radiology/diagnostic machines including but not exclusive to X-rays, PET and CT scans and radiation therapy?

No radioactive waste is produced by our Radiology department. The only radioactive waste produced in our organisation is in our operating theatres through the very limited use of a radioactive isotope during some breast surgery.

Question 2:

How much radioactive waste is being produced at the DHB per year?

The DHB does not monitor how much radioactive waste is produced each year given the very small amount involved.

Question 3:

How and where is this radioactive waste disposed of?

The DHB has in place very clear policies and procedures to support the use and disposal of radioactive isotopes and waste.

A Geiger counter is used to test all radioactive waste. Most of the waste is disposed on our behalf by Pacific Radiology which is also the entity responsible for providing us with the isotopes for injection. Solid waste may be released for unsupervised disposal if the activity concentration is less than 1 Megabecquerel. Short half-life waste (as in ^{99m}Tc) is stored until it has decayed below the above limit and then it can be discarded with other theatre waste.