

3 April 2024

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Catherine Jamieson
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Tēnā koe Catherine

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00037927

Thank you for your request that was transferred to Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora on 16 January 2024, asking for information about the disposal of Covid 19 vaccines under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

For the sake of clarity, I will address each question in turn.

Please provide material that outlines the supply chain that results in disposal for Covid 19 vaccines distributed to sites for administration that expired unused.

Unused vaccines are collected and disposed of by a contracted waste disposal company, and in compliance with [NZS4304:2002 - Standard on Management of Healthcare Waste](#). As part of this process, containers of unused vaccine are tracked to provide a visible audit system from collection to destruction.

All unused vaccine waste is collected from provider sites, transported in secure bins, and processed through a 3-step process which includes shredding, autoclaving and disposal.

Please provide material to demonstrate how many Covid vaccines were involved in this process.

Appendix One provides numbers of doses expired at provider sites.

Please also provide material that would allow a cost estimate (either per dose or total) for this process of returning and disposing of Covid vaccines.

The cost of disposal is not calculated per vial or dose. However, based on our agreement with the waste disposal company, we estimate the cost to be approximately \$1.05 per kg of vial waste (whether that's empty vials or full expired vials).

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Alana Ewe-Snow
Director, Prevention
National Public Health Service