

## 10 Questions to Ask Before You Sign a Medical Waste Service Contract

**1. What is the duration of the contract you will require me to sign?** If any medical waste disposal company requires you to sign a contract longer than 12 months you should really ask yourself why? Most businesses that require long contracts do so because they don't want you to have the option of leaving if they raise your prices, provide poor service or charge hidden fees.

**2. If you raise my prices or provide poor service will I have the opportunity to get out of my contract?** Most medical waste businesses that require long contracts also give you no way to get out once you sign. In fact these same providers charge very large fees amounting to thousands of dollars to "let you out of the contract". Remember if it isn't in writing, it doesn't exist so don't rely on the "lip service" of a salesperson.

**3. Is the price quoted all-inclusive or will there be additional charges on my bill?** A very common practice in the medical waste industry is to put a low monthly charge on the front page of the contract and have many pages of fine print outlining fees that may be charged later. These may include container surcharges, stop fees, fuel charges, taxes or excess waste fees, liquidated damage fees and minimum monthly charges. Scheduled and unscheduled price increases. These can oftentimes triple your original quote. Make sure you fully understand what you will be charged up front.

**4. If some of my waste containers are empty on pick-up day will I be charged for the empty containers?** All businesses have a fluctuation in the volume of waste they generate. Large medical waste disposal companies are infamous for charging their customers for waste they don't pick-up. For example, if you have 4 barrels and only 2 are full on pick-up day, they charge you for 4 regardless. It is simply not ethical to charge customers for waste that does not get transported or treated.

**5. If I generate excess waste and require an additional pick-up what will I be charged?** Some medical waste disposal companies punish their customer's hard work and success with unreasonable fees for an unscheduled pick-up or extra containers of waste. You should be treated like a valued customer not an inconvenience.

**6. What specialized training have your employees received that will benefit my business?** While many medical waste disposal companies simply hire a driver to pick-up your waste in this highly regulated industry. The employees handling your waste should have industry expertise and assist you in meeting regulatory requirements. If a company cannot specifically explain to you what training every employee has received, i.e. Bloodborne Pathogen, HIPPA Training, you should look elsewhere.

**7. Are vendors employees, courteous, neat, clean, uniformed and using the appropriate PPE, when servicing your facility?** The image of your business is very important and the vendors in your place of business should respect that. Your customers will more than likely observe the medical waste driver as he services your facility so make sure the company you select is considerate of your company image.

**8. If I have a problem and call the customer service number will I reach someone in Texas that can solve my problem today?** Chances are if you call the customer service line at a national company you will reach a customer service representative out of state who has no knowledge of your account. Additionally, this person will likely not have the knowledge of regulations specific to Texas or authority to solve your problem in an efficient manner. Ask for references in your type of business before you sign any contract.

**9. Is your company registered with Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and has your company ever had any violations?** The regulatory authority for all biohazardous medical waste transporters in Texas is TCEQ. Due diligence is your responsibility. Call TCEQ at (512) 239-1000 to verify a company is registered and does not have a history of violations. Ask about the Transporter's ID and ask about the Site Permit that they take your waste to for treatment.

**10. Can your company help us in putting together a comprehensive medical waste disposal program pertinent for our business?** Some medical waste disposal providers behave like trash companies. They drop off a container and pick it up in a week or a month and that's it. Every customer should have a medical waste assessment conducted to make sure all regulatory issues are addressed. Trust your business with a company that has the expertise to help you navigate the regulatory landscape of Regulated Medical Waste, pharmaceutical, pathologic, and chemotherapy wastes.