How to Recognize Improperly Disposed Radioactive Trash

(and what to do with it once you find it)

Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials
Radioactive Labels and Markings
But radioactive materials that are not marked find their way into the waste stream

Medical Waste:
Usually short-lived

Unregulated after it goes through a patient's body

Patients dispose of tissues, incontinence pads, napkins, diapers in regular trash

Can hold for decay in a secure location
Investigations may lead to clues about source of material. In this case, the pharmaceutical facility retrieved and properly disposed of the radioactive material. Improperly disposal of regulated materials can result in enforcement actions. Contact your Radiation Control Program Director.
Coal Ash/Fly ash can contain Radium

Contact your State Radiological Control Program on how to handle in your state
Filter Socks can catch radium-laden filter media

Pipe Scale: radium can build up on pipes in water treatment as well as oil and gas industry

Contact a radioactive waste broker to find and separate radioactive waste and properly dispose of material
Radium Dials/Markers

Generally licensed under 10 CFR 31.12 or equivalent Agreement
State regulations

Must be disposed of properly at a disposal facility

Or transferred to a person authorized to receive Ra-226 by a specific license
Other Items

Fiestaware: Vintage orange used a uranium glaze

Smoke Detectors contain exempt sources, but industrial smoke detectors can contain Radium and must be properly disposed of.

Tritium Exit Signs are generally licensed and should be properly disposed. Not readily detectable, but could spread tritium throughout landfill and leachate if broken. If no electrical connection or battery, probably a tritium exit sign.

Refractory Bricks contain Ra-226.
PET Waste from pharmaceutical company
Land of Make Believe, NJ: 2005  Numerous radium dials
K-85 Gauge – Metal Recycling Facility
Thorium 232 comes in all shapes and sizes
Summary

• Household waste containing short-lived medical waste may be secured and held for decay. Contact your RCPD.

• If evidence is found of improperly disposed of radioactive materials, like from a pharmaceutical company or even a hospital, contact your RCPD.

• Metal recycling facilities should identify the nuclide or hire a consultant to identify the nuclide. Call your RCPD to discuss disposal options.

• Go to CRCPD website for consultants and for RCPD contact information. [www.crcpd.org](http://www.crcpd.org)