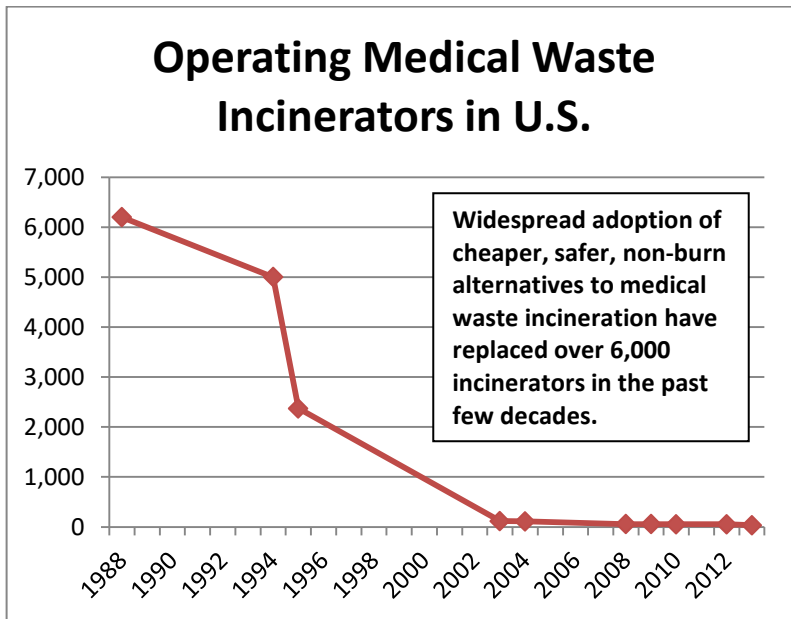


Medical Waste Incineration is Obsolete and Unneeded

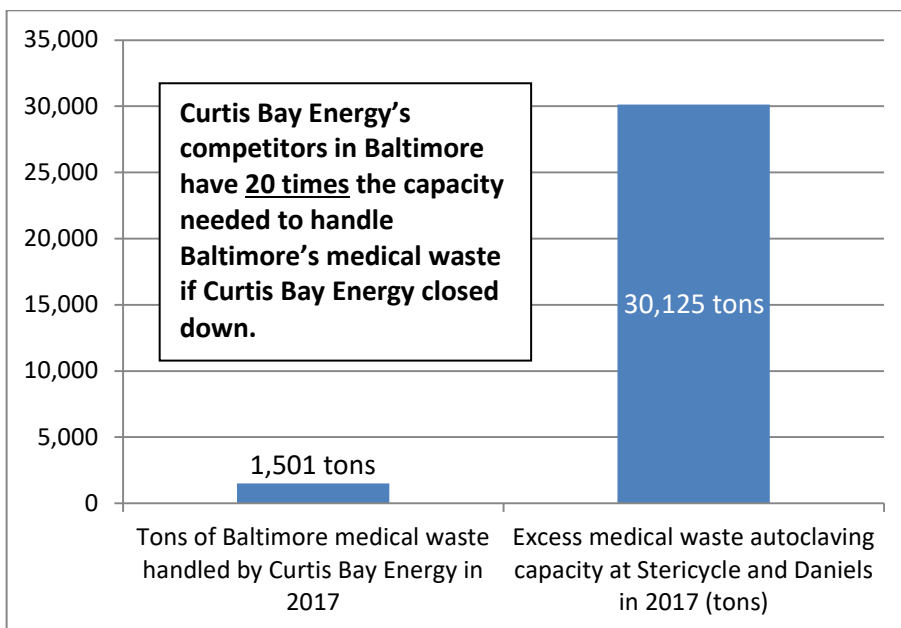
Baltimore is home to the nation’s largest medical waste incinerator. It’s now operated by Curtis Bay Medical Waste Services, better known by their former name, Curtis Bay Energy (also previously known as Medical Waste Associates, then later as Phoenix Services).

In 1995, Baltimore was home to another 23 hospital-based medical waste incinerators. Like most of those in the nation, all 23 of these closed down by 2013. Now, Curtis Bay Energy, with two burners, counts as two of fewer than 30 remaining medical waste incinerators in the nation, and the only ones still operating in Maryland. Only one of their two burners is operating for lack of waste to burn.



Year	Number of Incinerators	EPA Source Document
1988	6,200	Source
1994	5,000	Source
1995	2,373	Source
2003	116	Source
2004	110	(no longer online)
2008	57	Source
2009	57	Source
2010	54	(no longer online)
2012	53	Source
2013	33	Source

There is more than enough non-burn medical waste processing capacity in Baltimore to replace Curtis Bay Energy.



FACT: Only 5.8% of the waste burned at Curtis Bay Energy in 2017 came from Baltimore City.

The rest came from 18 states, plus DC and Canada.

Source: Maryland Department of the Environment

Non-burn alternatives are well-established

Incineration is an outdated technology for managing medical waste. Medical practice didn't stop because over 6,000 medical waste incinerators closed down in the past few decades. The industry moved to safer, cleaner, and cheaper alternatives like autoclaving. In fact, there's a whole [report](#) on alternatives to medical waste incineration by the international [Health Care Without Harm](#) network:

Is any waste from hospitals required to be incinerated?

No. None of the waste streams produced at a hospital or doctor's office are required to be incinerated, by state or federal law or regulation.

There are four main types of waste produced at hospitals:

Municipal solid waste: household and commercial trash which can go to normal municipal waste landfills or incinerators

Special medical waste (SMW): "Red bag" waste that can contain infectious material. Includes pathological waste (body parts), and sharps (needles). SMW must be treated before disposal. Treatment can include incineration, or various non-burn forms of disinfection including autoclaving. Once treated, the sterilized medical waste can be disposed of as municipal solid waste.¹

- Sharps are required to be put in puncture-proof containers.
- Pathological waste is a tiny fraction of SMW (less than 1%) and is often burned, but can also be handled with non-burn sterilization alternatives like alkaline hydrolysis. Some states [require](#) it to be incinerated, but Maryland is not one of those states.

Hazardous waste: some chemotherapeutic waste is legally considered hazardous, and must go to a hazardous waste disposal facility (landfill or incinerator). Maryland has no such facilities, and this tiny portion of a hospital's waste stream is already shipped out-of-state for disposal.

Radioactive waste: some hospital waste is radioactive and required to go to a licensed "low-level" radioactive waste disposal facility, the closest of which is a landfill in South Carolina.

Non-Incineration Medical Waste Treatment Technologies

A Resource for Hospital Administrators,
Facility Managers, Health Care Professionals,
Environmental Advocates, and
Community Members

August 2001



Health Care Without Harm
1755 S Street, N.W.
Suite 6B
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202.234.0091
www.noharm.org

¹ COMAR 10.06.06 http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/SubtitleSearch.aspx?search=10.06.06.*

Medical Waste in Baltimore

Source for all numbers below: Maryland Department of the Environment

Special Medical Waste Processors in Baltimore City

There are three commercial processing facilities licensed to take special medical waste in Baltimore City:

Facility	Technology	Capacity (tons/yr)	Tons Accepted (2017)	Tons From Baltimore (2017)	% from Baltimore	Excess capacity (tons/yr)	Percent Capacity
Curtis Bay Energy	Incinerator	62,050	25,696	1,501	6%	36,354	41%
Stericycle	Autoclave	30,000	18,644	2,153	12%	11,356	62%
Daniels Sharpsmart Special Medical Waste Processing and Transfer	Autoclave	20,000	1,231	54	4%	18,769	6%

The above data shows that the three facilities are each operating well below their capacity, that most of the waste they process is from outside of the city, and that the two autoclave facilities have enough excess capacity (30,125 tons/year) that they can handle all of the waste Curtis Bay Energy processes (25,696 tons in 2017).

Where Baltimore's Medical Waste went in 2017:

Facility	Tons	%
Stericycle	2,153	56%
Curtis Bay Energy	1,501	39%
Biomedical Waste Services (Anne Arundel County)	116	3%
Daniels Sharpsmart Special Medical Waste Processing and Transfer	54	1%

Where Medical Waste Processed in Baltimore Comes From & Goes

Stericycle:

Stericycle Waste Accepted From:

Origin	Tons (2017)	%
VA	6,489	31%
MD (21 Counties)	6,379	30%
Baltimore City	2,153	10%
DC	1,994	9%
NY	1,688	8%
NJ	1,352	6%
PA	878	4%
NC	283	1%
WV	44	0%
TOTAL	21,260	100%

Where Waste Goes after Stericycle accepts it (2017):

Facility	Facility Type	Location	Tons	%
Sterilized (Autoclaved) Medical Waste Sent to:				
Modern Landfill	Landfill	York County, PA	18,445	97%
Wheelabrator	Incinerator	Baltimore, MD	55	0.3%
Untreated Medical Waste Sent to:				
Stericycle	Chem-Clav	Berks County, PA	462	2%
Stericycle	Incinerator	Haw River, NC	48	0.3%
TOTAL			19,010	100%

Curtis Bay Energy:

Curtis Bay Energy Waste Accepted From:

Where Waste Goes after CBE accepts it (2017):

Origin	Tons (2017)	%
PA	7,574	29%
MD (21 Counties)	4,565	18%
VA	2,940	11%
NJ	1,825	7%
Canada	1,654	6%
DE	1,627	6%
Baltimore City	1,501	6%
NY	1,198	5%
RI	948	4%
MA	845	3%
NH	315	1%
CT	294	1%
TX	187	1%
DC	102	0%
CA	39	0%
SC	34	0%
WV	27	0%
FL	9	0%
ME	9	0%
AL	3	0%
TOTAL	25,696	100%

Facility	Facility Type	Location	Tons	%
Medical Waste Incinerator Ash Sent to:				
King George Landfill	Landfill	King George County, VA	10,998	100%

Daniels Sharpsmart:

Daniels Sharpsmart Waste Accepted From:

Where Waste Goes after Daniels Sharpsmart accepts it (2017):

Origin	Tons (2017)	%
MD (8 Counties)	527	43%
VA	470	38%
DC	67	5%
PA	62	5%
Baltimore City	54	4%
TX	33	3%
Canada	17	1%
NC	1	0%
TOTAL	1,231	100%

Facility	Facility Type	Location	Tons	%
Sterilized (Autoclaved) Medical Waste Sent to:				
Modern Landfill	Landfill	York County, PA	1,214	99%
Untreated Medical Waste Sent to:				
Curtis Bay Energy	Incinerator	Baltimore, MD	16	1%
TOTAL			1,230	100%