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Med waste being dumped illegally, say activists; no proof, says TNPCB

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Chennai: Despite clear guidelines on safe disposal, medical waste continues to be illegally dumped at five locations in and around Chennai, including water bodies in Retteri, Thiruneermalai, Mudichur, Vandalur and Mevalurkuppam in Sriperumbudur.

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board is the sole monitoring agency that can act against violators, but its local officials often brush aside the real threat to environment and human life as a non-issue, activists said.

There are 10 authorised medical waste handlers in the state, including two for Chennai, Kancheepuram and Chengalpet districts—G J Multiclave Pvt Ltd at Thempakkam, Chengalpet and Tamil Nadu Waste Manage-



Residents' photos of medical waste dumped at Retteri lake

ment Ltd in Kancheepuram.

All hospitals with TNPCB approval sign a pact that they would hand over medical waste to only these two firms.

However, in the past two years, 50 incidents of medical waste dumping in these water bodies have been reported by residents, with photographic and video evidence.

V Pugazhendhan, a city-based activist, said TNPCB is usually a mute spectator.

“They should declare they do not have the manpower or infrastructure to monitor bio-medical waste. Why are they putting people's health and lives at risk. The state government should form a separate department for this,” he said.

Once a complaint is raised of illegal dumping of medical waste, TNPCB officials are supposed to visit the site. “Even when residents complain, TNPCB officials do not visit the site. Instead,

they issue a namesake show-cause notice and a closure notice when evidence is provided about hospitals being involved in this illegal activity. They have not taken any action against any hospital till date,” he said.

When these questions were raised to an official, he cited manpower shortage and said only 450 employees, including drivers, were available with TNPCB. The official added that whenever such cases are reported, they do take appropriate action. “We ask all clinics, pharmacies and hospitals to adhere to our rules... there is no proof of hospitals being involved in this,” said the officer.

TOI pointed out two instances where hospital logos were visible on trucks disposing medical waste, but the official said they had issued a closure notice to those hospitals.

News Item in The Times of India newspaper, Chennai Edition dated 06th August 2021

CHENNAI: Despite clear guidelines on safe disposal, medical waste continues to be illegally dumped at five locations in and around Chennai, including water bodies in Retteri, Thiruneermalai, Mudichur, Vandalur and Mevalurkuppam in Sriperumbudur. The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board is the sole monitoring agency that can act against violators, but its local officials often brush aside the real threat to environment and human life as a non-issue, activists said. There are 10 authorised medical waste handlers in the state, including two for Chennai, Kancheepuram and Chengalpet districts — G J Multiclave Pvt Ltd at Thenmelpakkam, Chengalpet and Tamil Nadu Waste Management Ltd in Kancheepuram.

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