

Environmental Health and Safety

Laboratory Waste Disposal Procedures

Purpose

Cleaning and waste disposal service in a laboratory requires strict adherence to applicable policies and procedures. It is a joint effort between laboratory personnel, Building Services personnel and Environmental Health and Safety personnel. The goal is to provide cleaning and waste disposal services for laboratories by developing procedures that everyone understands and will follow to avoid the hazards to personnel conducting these services.

Waste disposal is managed by the appropriate party and typically includes the following categories: municipal waste, hazardous waste, radioactive waste, biological waste and sharps. Each waste category must be handled and managed according to established procedures and work practices.

Laboratory Waste Disposal Responsibilities

Laboratory Personnel are responsible for managing their activities to eliminate or minimize hazards and to provide a safe working environment for anyone who has a need to enter their laboratory. It is important for laboratory personnel to recognize that other personnel will not be familiar with laboratory activities and may not understand what is being disposed of.

Laboratory personnel must keep floors free of obstructions and hazards to allow Building Services personnel to service the laboratory and clean the floors. Building Services personnel will not pick up sharps from the floor, such as broken glass, glass pipets, plastic pipette tips, glass capillary tubes, razor blades and other related sharps.

All spills and hazardous materials must be cleaned up by laboratory personnel or, if necessary, with assistance from Environmental Health and Safety personnel. Floors, working surfaces, and equipment must be free of hazardous residues.

Building Services Personnel will empty municipal trash, supply paper towels for hand washing areas, and sweep, vacuum, mop, and refinish floors when needed. Building Services personnel should review the activities and waste practices of each laboratory with laboratory personnel to ensure that everyone understands where and what hazards are present, what services will be provided, and where the municipal wastes are located.

Building Services personnel should wear, at a minimum, safety glasses and gloves when working in a laboratory. If a hazardous situation is noticed, (e.g., spill on floor, sharps not properly packaged, etc.) contact your supervisor. The supervisor should discuss the situation with laboratory personnel or leave a discrepancy notice.



Environmental Health and Safety Laboratory Waste Disposal Procedures

EHS Personnel develop procedures for disposing of wastes that may be hazardous. EHS personnel provide timely removal of hazardous and radioactive waste and help with the clean-up of hazardous spills, when necessary.

Laboratory Waste Disposal Procedure Summary

Ensure materials placed in the municipal waste are suitable for this type of disposal, especially:

- Do not place any liquids in the municipal waste.
- Do not dispose of chemical waste, including stock containers with unused product, in the municipal waste.
- Empty or rinsed containers must be free of any hazardous residue and be marked "empty."
- Place non-contaminated sharps in an appropriate, puncture-resistant container to prevent injuries. Contaminated sharps must not be disposed of through municipal waste.
- If a material can be mistaken as a hazardous, radioactive, or biological material, but is not, it must be clearly marked as non-hazardous.

For all other types of waste, make sure the container is appropriately labeled and separated from municipal waste:

Hazardous waste – is managed in accordance with the Hazardous Materials Management and Disposal Policy and Procedures manual. This type of waste may only be removed by Environmental Health and Safety personnel.

Radioactive waste – is managed in accordance with the Radiation Safety Manual. This type of waste may only be removed by Environmental Health and Safety personnel.

Biological waste – is managed in accordance with the Biohazardous Waste and Sharps Disposal policy.

Sharps - At U of I a "sharp" is defined as any object which could readily puncture or cut the skin of an individual. Refer to EHS Guidance Document "Sharps and Pipette Tips Disposal" and the "Sharps Disposal Flow Chart" for more information.

