

A Quick Guide to Laboratory Waste Management

Laboratory wastes must be segregated by waste classification at the point of generation.

These wastes must be accumulated in proper containers, labeled, and stored in accordance with the regulatory requirements for the waste classification. These classifications include:

- Hazardous Waste
- Medical Waste
- Radioactive Waste
- Broken Glassware
- Sharps
- Building Solid Waste

Every effort should be made to avoid creating wastes which fall into multiple classifications; such "mixed wastes" may be impossible to dispose of under current regulations.

Hazardous wastes are chemicals which are either listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (or the Tennessee Division of Solid Waste Management) or have characteristics defined by either of those agencies. Please see the EH&S web page, the "Guide to Hazardous Waste Management," or call EH&S for guidance.

Hazardous wastes must be accumulated in containers which are compatible with the waste and labeled with the words "hazardous waste," accumulation start date, and an inventory of the contents. The container must be stored according to federal and state regulations. Utilize the above sources for complete information, including proper disposal of empty containers.

Radioactive wastes must be accumulated, labeled, and stored according to conditions of the Tennessee radioactive material license applicable to the generating department. Radioactive wastes must be stored away from non-radioactive wastes. Please see the "Radiation Safety Manual" for complete information.

Sharps, including needles, syringes, razor blades, scalpel blades, and contaminated broken glass, must be placed in puncture resistant sharps containers and held for pick-up. Sharps containers must not be overfilled. If you generate only small volumes of sharps containers, EH&S can handle the disposal; large volume generators should use the University medical waste contractor. Please see the EH&S web site for details.

Medical wastes include vials, culture dishes, gloves, gauze, bloody bandages and towels, and related items contaminated with pathogenic or potentially infectious materials. These items may be disposed of through the University medical waste contractor.

Small quantities of certain types of contaminated items may be autoclaved, or decontaminated with 1:10 bleach solution or equivalent, and disposed in the building solid waste. Decontaminated materials must not be disposed in red bags or other containers with biohazard markings. Please call EH&S for guidance.

Uncontaminated **broken glass** must be accumulated in appropriate boxes which are to be sealed prior to disposal in the building solid waste.

Uncontaminated or decontaminated **building solid waste** consisting of materials that would normally be disposed of in the building solid waste may be placed in appropriate trash receptacles for disposal. Please limit quantities of materials with a "biomedical" appearance.