

# Disposal Procedures in UW Chemistry Laboratories

**SHARPS:** Items **designed to cut or puncture skin** and items with human blood and body fluids or bacteria. These items receive special handling and are decontaminated (for biological contamination) and pulverized prior to landfill disposal.

**Examples include:**

- Needles
- Scalpels
- Razor blades
- Syringes with attached needles
- Biologically contaminated Pasteur pipettes, pipette tips, broken vials and laboratory slides.



**Container:** Closable, puncture resistant, leak-proof plastic container with **yellow sharps label** for non-biologically contaminated material or with **biohazard label** for biologically hazardous material. Do not fill these containers completely.

**Disposal Procedure:** When full, label with your name and lab room # and take to the red MERI collection hopper on the loading dock. Custodians will not remove sharps containers from labs or hallways.

**NON HAZARDOUS TRASH:** Items that present NO HAZARD if disposed of as normal trash. These items are neither sharp nor contaminated. This waste stream is handled directly by custodians and goes to landfill without further treatment.

**Examples include:**

- Unbroken glass and plastic that has been washed or decontaminated from chemical or biological hazards
- Weighing boats
- Sturdy test and centrifuge tubes
- Petri dishes and plastic lab ware
- Triple rinsed, uncapped empty bottles
- Paper towels and gloves that have no significant contamination.



**Container:** Lab trash can with plastic liner.

**Disposal Procedure:**

- Place items in lab trash can for custodians to remove to dumpster.
- Place large ( $\geq 2$  liter) bottles next to trash can.

**CHEMICALS THAT POSE A HEALTH OR ECOLOGICAL HAZARD:** These items are either incinerated or recycled.

Consult the UW Laboratory Safety Guide, Appendix A, for a list of disposal procedures for specific chemicals.

**Container:** Original chemical containers,



**OR** sturdy and leak-proof container with appropriate label, **OR** 5 gallon carboy for excess solvent or used silica gel.

**Disposal Procedure:**

Request a pickup by UW Safety using the Chemical Disposal/Surplus Pickup Request Form at <https://ehs.wisc.edu/disposal-services/chemical-disposal/chemical-disposal-surplus-pick-up-form/>

**HAZARDOUS GLASS and PLASTIC:** Items that can **puncture, cut, or scratch** if disposed of in normal trash containers. Package these items in a sturdy box to protect custodial staff and label with your name and lab room #. These items go directly to the landfill without any treatment.

**Examples include:**

- Pasteur pipettes (not contaminated)
- Other pipettes and tips (glass or plastic)
- Slides and cover slips
- Broken or fragile glass including chemically contaminated glass unless the chemical poses a significant hazard.
- Syringe bodies (without needles)



**Container:** Sturdy and leak-proof with Hazardous Glass label including your name and lab room #. Plastic lined cardboard box **OR** plastic jug with sealed lid.



**Disposal Procedure:**

- Autoclave before boxing if contaminated with infectious agents, recombinant organisms or human blood.
- Seal container closed.
- Affix **Green "OK to Trash" Label** with name and lab #. Place in hallway next to your lab door for custodians to remove **OR** take it to the labeled hopper on the loading dock yourself.



**CHEMICALS THAT DO NOT POSE AN ECOLOGICAL OR HEALTH HAZARD:** These items can either be sewered (washed down the sink) or sent to the landfill (thrown in the trash) depending on their water solubility. Consult the UW [Laboratory Safety Guide, Appendix A](#), for a list of disposal procedures for specific chemicals.

**Container:** Normal Trash is handled roughly. To keep the chemicals contained during handling, place the waste in a tightly closed bottle, box, or bag, and pack this inside a second box (an over-pack). Label the over-pack with the waste identity, so the handlers are assured that the waste is safe for normal trash.



**Disposal Procedure:**

- Affix **green "OK to Trash" label** (with name and lab # to the over-pack). Place in hallway next to your lab door for custodians to remove **OR** take it to the labeled hopper on the loading dock yourself.
- If the waste is water soluble, wash it down a laboratory sink with plenty of water.



**E-WASTE:** Discarded computers, instruments, and other electronics are recycled by SWAP. Place these items on the carts in the sub-basement. **Remove any hazardous materials and check with the Building Manager** before placing in the SWAP pick-up area.

**OTHER ITEMS:** There are a number of other items that require special disposal procedures. **Examples include:** fluorescent light bulbs, batteries, mercury containing items, and asbestos containing items. Consult the [UW Safety Recyclopeda](#) for appropriate disposal.