Energy Technologies Area

SAFETY ALERT

July 30, 2024

Proper Disposal of Contaminated Lab Debris

Hazards: Fire/Explosions from Reactive Chemicals; Improper Hazardous Waste Disposal

Chemically contaminated gloves, wipes, plastics and other lab debris are typically generated in laboratory areas. Contaminants may include flammable solvents, acids, nanomaterials, or toxic solids. Collect and dispose of these items as hazardous waste unless you have determined that the debris is non-hazardous.

Here are some guidelines for properly managing contaminated debris:

1. Determine if the contaminated debris is hazardous waste (solvent, acid, nanomaterial, corrosive, toxic). If the debris is hazardous waste, attach a completed red hazardous waste label to each metal flip can or collection baggie before adding waste to it. Clearly indicate the accumulation start date. The waste description should clearly identify the waste stream: Gloves, wipes, and lab debris contaminated with _____.
2. For non-hazardous debris, label the collection baggie or trash can with a green "non-hazardous waste" sticker or simply indicate "trash."
3. Always segregate incompatible items. For example, collect and dispose of debris with flammable solvents separately from debris contaminated with corrosive acid.
4. NEVER place water or air reactive materials into the contaminated wipe/glove baggies or flip cans. Many air and water reactive chemicals must be covered in mineral oil to prevent a hazardous reaction. These should be disposed of separately.
5. NEVER place sample containers with hazardous liquids or solids into the contaminated debris waste flip cans. These must be disposed of separately as hazardous waste. See Safety Alert- Sample Management and Disposal
6. Empty (drained) glass sample vials can be added to the broken glass boxes. See Safety Alert- Broken Glass Boxes
7. Place empty chemical containers <5 gallons into the regular trash unless the residue is extremely hazardous. Once completely drained, these can be placed into the regular trash. Write "EMPTY" on the bottle label. See Safety Alert Empty Chemical Containers.

8. NEVER use the flip cans or waste baggies for disposal of sharps such as needles and razor blades. Place these into the designated sharps disposal containers. See Sharps and Needle Safety
9. NEVER use the hazardous waste flip cans for disposal of non-hazardous items such as non-contaminated paper, wrappers, or boxes. Practice waste minimization as much as practical. See Safety Alert- Non-Hazardous Trash Disposal
10. The hazardous waste collection flip cans and baggies must remain closed when not adding wastes.
11. Submit a hazardous waste requisition for contaminated lab debris pick-up and disposal at least every **6 months**. Go to: https://wastereq.lbl.gov
12. The Principal Investigator and Lab Area Safety Lead should regularly check hazardous waste disposal flip cans, broken glass boxes, and trash containers to ensure the contents are appropriate. This can be part of the quarterly lab self-inspections.

Further information on requirements regarding disposal of contaminated materials are found in the LBNL Waste Generator Guidelines: PUB-3000 Chapter 20 Waste Generator Services.

Contact Ron Scholtz, ETA Safety Coordinator at X8137 (rgscholtz@lbl.gov) if you need assistance with disposal of chemically contaminated materials.

Chemically Contaminated Glove/Wipe Flip Can

Non-Hazardous Trash Only