The Waste-Paper

The Hazardous Waste Disposal Monthly Update

Volume 9 Issue 2 **February 2006**

Mercury disposal and labeling

Elemental mercury that will be reclaimed is not considered hazardous waste per federal Universal Waste rules. Mercury and mercury debris (e.g., broken thermometers, spill debris) generated at Princeton is sent for reclamation. Therefore, the following procedure should be followed when disposing of elemental mercury and contaminated debris:

1. Collect mercury in a sealable container. Place broken thermometers or similar materials in a sealable plastic bag or plastic or glass jar. Keep the amount of debris to a minimum. Be sure that materials may be easily removed for consolidation.

2. Label the container with a printed label, as described below, or with the words "MERCURY SPILL DEBRIS" or "USED MERCURY"
   - Your name and department
   - The phone number where you can be reached
   - The date the mercury debris was placed in the container.

3. Keep the material in your laboratory until the next scheduled waste pickup and bring to the waste collection point during the scheduled time.

4. EHS personnel will periodically collect the mercury and or debris, consolidate it, and send it to a mercury reclamation/recycling plant.

For your convenience, the links below can be used to print 2" X 4" Avery® 5163 labels.

Mercury Spill Debris or Used Mercury

All other Mercury compounds must be handled as hazardous waste.

Remember to minimize mercury wastes by substituting mercury-containing equipment, such as thermometers, with non-mercury alternatives. Contact EHS for information or a free exchange of most thermometers.

For more information, contact Joan Hutzly (258-6251) or Steve Elwood (258-6271

Joan's Pet Peeves: Illegible Waste Labels

Yes, folks, you've awoken Joan's pet peeves again. For those of you who don't know, Joan Hutzly is a technical specialist for Environmental Health and Safety who handles a lot of the waste coordination. Joan's Pet Peeves is a column developed to report when people disregard the waste procedures established for the waste pickup.

There have been numerous instances in the past couple of months where the hazardous waste label is illegible. Most times this is caused by solvent that has dripped and smeared the text. The label text, which is usually filled out using a pen or marker, will readily smear from solvents.

Some possible solutions:

- Use pencil instead of pen when completing the labels.
- Contact EHS for a pre-printed laminated label or tag.

Please ensure hazardous waste labels are legible at all times. Illegible or unlabeled chemical waste containers are costly to manage. Costs incurred from characterization of unidentified wastes are charged back to the department or laboratory.

Contact Joan Hutzly (258-6251) for pre-printed labels.

Next Waste Pickup

February 23, 2006

Bring wastes to pickup area on Wednesday, February 22

- Frick Loading Dock
- LTL Loading Dock
- E-Quad Room 7 (on dock)
- Jadwin Hall Room 125

Drain Disposal

Confused about what can go down the drain and what must be collected as hazardous waste? The sewer authority and the Environmental Protection Agency have strict rules against disposing of most hazardous chemicals via the drain. The following materials **may be drain disposed** via the sanitary sewer:

- Acids or bases with pH between 3 and 11.
- Alcohols in concentrations less than 26% (e.g., no longer flammable)
- Chemicals on our Non-Hazardous Waste List, available at http://web.princeton.edu/sites/ehs/chemwaste/nonhaz.htm
- Other chemicals for which permission is granted through EHS or Bob Ortego, Environmental Compliance Manager (rfo@Princeton.edu or 258-1841).

Solvents other than alcohol or ethanol may not be disposed via the drain in any quantity. This includes acetone, toluene, xylene, and other solvents. If you typically use acetone for rinsing, either collect the rinsate as hazardous waste or consider using ethanol instead.

Use secondary containment near sinks or drains to prevent accidental release of hazardous chemicals in the event of a spill or leak.

Never dispose of chemical waste via a storm sewer. Please see the *Policy on Drain Disposal of Chemical Waste* at http://web.princeton.edu/sites/ehs/policies/draindisposal.htm for more information.

Last Call…

The closing date for the EHS gas cylinder amnesty program is rapidly approaching. Any laboratories with unwanted or unusable compressed gas cylinders must contact Steve Elwood at 8-6271 or by e-mail at selwood@princeton.edu **no later than Thursday, February 23rd.**

Remember…
If you have unneeded gas cylinders, first call the manufacturer or distributor and ask that they pick up the cylinder for return. If they will not take the cylinder back, please call EHS at 258-5294 for assistance. Should EHS need to dispose of the cylinder via hazardous waste contractors, there may be a modest surcharge to your department. Please use returnable or refillable cylinders as available.

EHS HAZARDOUS WASTE CONTACTS	
Main Office	8-5294
Steve Elwood (Chemical & Radioactive Waste)	8-6271
Marcia Leach (Waste-Paper)	8-5296
Don Robasser (Biohazardous Waste)	8-6256
EHS Web Page http://www.princeton.edu/ehs	