

Introduction

Recently there have been numerous incidents involving hazardous waste. Including deformed chemical waste carboy, chemical waste spill in public area, a chemical bottle found in a clinical bin, sharps stored in faulty sharp containers and an empty radioactive stock solution found in waste.



Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the waste producer to ensure their hazardous waste:

- meets the legal requirements,
- minimises the risk to Health and Safety and
- reduces adverse environmental impact.

Waste should be appropriately identified, labelled, treated, stored and segregated in accordance with their specific waste stream. Contamination between waste streams can cause significant risk to the people handling, transporting and treating the waste, as well as putting the University's licences/permits conditions at risk.

Managing Hazardous waste

Biohazardous waste

- No chemicals (both hazardous and non-hazardous), glass bottles, batteries, lighters, cannisters or aerosol cans are allowed to be put into any biohazardous waste stream, such as clinical, GMO, Biosecurity or anatomical. These items can cause explosion, fires and injuries to workers who process this waste stream.



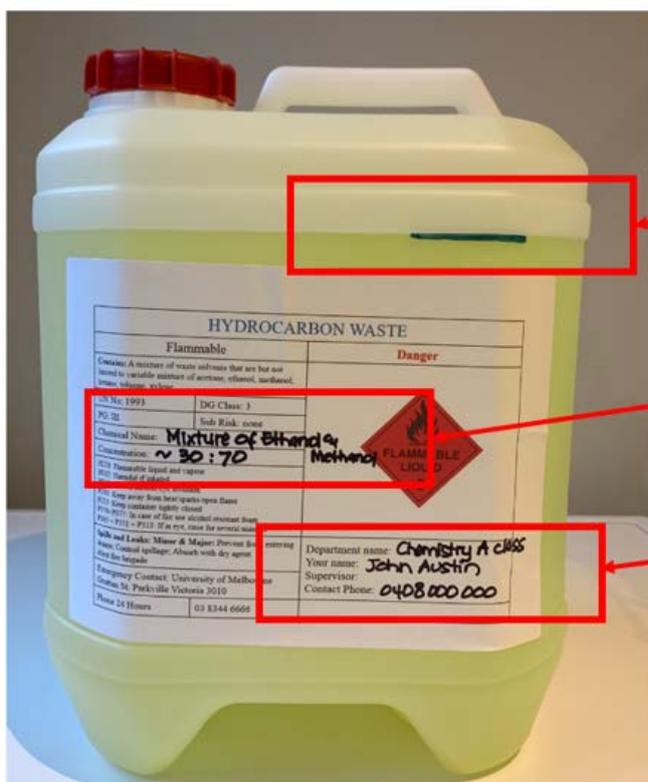
Sharps

- Only use compliant sharp containers for sharp waste such as needles, razor blades, glass test tubes, Pasteur pipettes, pipette tips, glass plates and any items that can pierce through plastics; and
- Do not use faulty sharp containers. Once a sharp container lid is shut, the container cannot be reopened. If the container can still be opened, it means that this container is faulty and should not be used.



Chemical waste

- Use the appropriate carboy and attach the correct label;
- Provide the name of chemical and approximate concentration, plus the details of the waste producer;
- Do not overfill the chemical waste carboy;



Do not overfill, this is the maximum level

Mandatory
Provide the chemical name/s and approximate concentration

Mandatory
Fill in your details

- Remove the ring of the lid to avoid leaking during transport;

Remove the ring of the lid before using the carboy. It is to fully close the carboy to avoid leaking.



- Pay attention to any deformation of the carboy that indicates there is a reaction between the chemicals. Work in a fume hood when releasing any gas/fume built up in the carboy to avoid the carboy bursting; and
- Review work practices if waste removal location is accessible by members of the public, e.g. hospital locations, consider escorting the contractor so any incidents can be actioned immediately.



Radiation waste

- It is the responsibility of the laboratory group to follow the process of delay and decay to manage radiation waste, where applicable;
- Never put any sharps or glass test tubes in the bag as this will create hazards for people handling the waste;
- Never put empty radioactive stock solution containers in a hazardous waste stream, as it will trigger a high reading. Separate these containers and follow the delay and decay process separately; and
- Before disposing of radioactive waste that is deemed no longer radioactive, the respective DRSO (Department Radiation Safety Officer) and the University Radiation Safety Officer will re-measure every waste bag to ensure they are no longer radioactive.

Further information

Website and guidance:

- [Health and Safety: Waste management requirements](#)
- [Hazardous waste page](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/hazard-topics/hazardous-waste) on the University safety website (https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/hazard-topics/hazardous-waste)

Contacts for further assistance:

- [Department Radiation Safety Officers](#)
- [Local Health and Safety Business Partner](#)
- [Health and Safety Assist](#)
- [University Radiation Safety Officer](#)