

Autoclave Best Practices *for Efficient, Effective Sterilization*

For all Autoclave Cycles:

Biohazardous Waste:

- ✓ Use autoclave tape*
- ✓ Run spore tests quarterly*
- ✓ Loosen caps[†]
- ✓ Use secondary containment bins
- ✗ Avoid small loads[‡], but also do not overload the autoclave

- ✓ Double bag
- ✓ Attach a biohazard tag
- ✓ Loosely tie the bag closed[†]
- ✗ Do not overpack the bag



Liquid Cycle for Media & Solutions

Gravity Cycle for Dry Goods

- ✓ Add 1/2 inch water in secondary containment bin
- ✓ Fill bottles/flasks less than 2/3 full
- ✓ Sterilization time depends on volume
- ✗ Dry cycle unnecessary

- ✓ 45 min sterilization usually sufficient*
- ✓ 5 min dry time usually sufficient[§]
- ✗ No water in secondary containment bin

* Autoclave tape is insufficient for verifying sterilization; quarterly spore tests are recommended for confirmation.

† Loosening caps prevents pressure build-up and potential explosions. Similarly, loosening bags allows steam to enter.

‡ Pool loads with others to be more energy efficient.

§ Dry cycles use 6 gallons of water per minute; limit the dry time to 5 minutes to save water.

Autoclave Resources

ehs.colorado.edu/training/autoclave-use-training/

Contact for this Autoclave

Name: _____

Office Location: _____

Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

Questions?

- ? Nicole Kethley (nicole.kethley@colorado.edu) or Annette Erbse (annette.erbse@colorado.edu) can answer questions regarding autoclave cycle parameters
- ? CU Green Labs can answer questions regarding energy and water consumption of autoclaves
- ? EH&S can answer questions about how to properly perform a spore test and the latest spore test results for this autoclave