

Segregation and Disposal of Metal Sharps

This guidance document provides instruction on segregation and disposal of metal sharps. Metal sharps include: needles, scalpels, razor blades and other metal blades. All metal sharps – regardless of whether they are contaminated or not, must be sent through EH&S for disposal. State laws regulate disposal of metal sharps to protect waste handlers from both physical and contamination hazards that they present. **All metal sharps must be separated from other wastes and placed into puncture proof, non-leaking containers** such as biohazard sharps containers (best option), rigid plastic containers, metal containers and glass containers (if no other containers are available). All containers must have a lid that seals tightly to the container and also protects from puncture hazards. For other puncture hazards such as broken glass and pipette tips, refer to the separate disposal guidance document titled “Segregation and Disposal of Broken Glass, Pipette Tips and other Plastic Puncture Hazards”. Please see the segregation flow chart for metal sharps at the end of this guidance document for further reference.

Radioactive: Metal sharps that are contaminated with radioactive materials must be disposed through the Health Physics/Radiation Safety program. They should be placed in sharps containers provided by Health Physics and submitted for disposal. Questions? Call 303-492-6523 or email: hpl@colorado.edu.

Biohazardous: Metal sharps that are contaminated with an infectious substance or rDNA molecules must be autoclaved before disposal. This includes sharps that have been used to administer pharmaceuticals or draw fluids from “clean” animals. This is for protection of personnel handling the waste. Chemical disinfection is not effective for needles and small syringes. Metal sharps must be placed into a puncture proof container (i.e. a biohazard sharps container) that can withstand autoclave temperatures and has a built in sterilization indicator or autoclave tape attached. Once the waste has been disinfected, dispose of through the Hazardous Waste program, using a Hazardous Materials/Waste (HMW) tag. Ensure there is an autoclave indicator strip on each container of sharps, and write “Autoclaved” on the HMW tag.



Chemically contaminated: Metal sharps that are contaminated with any of the following: heavy metals, acutely toxic hazardous material (EPA “P-Listed” chemicals or if the oral LD50 is less than 50mg/kg), or contaminated with other hazardous chemicals must be segregated from other wastes and sent for disposal through the Hazardous waste program using a Hazardous Materials/Waste (HMW) tag. The EPA “P-list” can be viewed [here](#). Metal sharps must be in a puncture proof container for disposal. Container contents on HMW tag must list the chemical contaminants and their approximate percentages. **Even trace amounts of chemical and/or heavy metal contaminants are important to list on the HMW tag.** PLEASE – keep all mercury contaminated metal sharps and mercury thermometers segregated from all other wastes!

Non-chemically contaminated: Metal sharps that are either clean or contaminated with non-hazardous material must also be disposed of through EH&S. To facilitate minimization of hazardous wastes, non-contaminated sharps should be segregated from other contaminated metal sharps. They must be placed inside a puncture proof container. Metal sharps cannot be disposed of in the regular garbage. Do not place in laboratory or office trash cans. Metal sharps are also not recyclable – do not place these items inside or near the recycling collection bins.



Metal Sharps Generated from Personal or Medical Use: The EH&S Hazardous Material disposal programs are funded and regulated to serve as disposal mechanisms for metal sharps generated as part of University business operations only. For information and assistance regarding the proper management and disposal of metal sharps (needles, syringes, scalpels and blades) generated from personal medical use, visit the Boulder County Public Health website at: <http://www.bouldercounty.org/family/disease/pages/rxdisposal.aspx> for guidance. For information and assistance regarding occupational exposures to Bloodborne Pathogens, contact University Risk Management at 303-492-1901.

If your waste has chemical contaminants, it is always important to inform EH&S. The only way we can ensure the correct method of disposal is from accurate information listed on the HMW tag or Radioactive Materials pick-up request form. Often we don't need to know the exact concentrations of chemicals, but if there is a chance that a chemical exists in your waste – even in very small amounts, we need to know about it.

PLEASE don't hesitate to give us a call and ask questions – we are here to help you!

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL/WASTE		
Environmental Health & Safety, 413 UCB (303) 492-7845 hazmat@colorado.edu • http://www.colorado.edu/ehs		
PRESS HARD USING INK - MULTIPLE COPIES		
Dept.	Chemistry	Bldg. Cristol Rm. # 40
Generator Name	John Smith	Phone 2-7845
Principal Investigator	Morrison	
Exact Container Location	SAA #2	
% (Must Total 100)	Container Contents	DOT/EPA Codes EH&S Use Only
100%	Needles, syringe barrels	
Trace	Nicotine	
	Epinephrine	
Continued Next Tag? No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (Tag 1 of 1) Do Not Write On Back		
Container Size and Type 1 gal. Sharps cont. pH		
Net Quantity Contained: Liters (liquid) or Kilograms (solid) 0.5 kg		
Hazards/Precautions:		
(I certify: accuracy of this record; that I have received UCB Hazardous Waste Training within the last year; that peroxide formers have been inhibited and biological materials have been rendered inactive/non-infectious and that I am actively seeking to minimize the generation of hazardous waste.)		
Generator Signature JS		
Date Tag Submitted 9-6-12 Received		

Metal Sharps Segregation Requirements

(Not to be used for broken glass or plastic sharps – keep these separated as much as possible and refer to separate segregation chart for these)

