

## **Cleaning and Waste Disposal Services for Laboratories**

Cleaning and waste disposal services in a laboratory requires strict adherence to applicable policies and procedures. It is a joint effort between laboratory personnel, Building Services personnel and Environmental Health and Safety personnel. Our goal is to provide cleaning and waste disposal services for laboratories, develop procedures that everyone understands and will follow, and through this process, avoid the hazards to personnel conducting these services.

For laboratories, Building Services will empty municipal trash, supply paper towels for hand washing areas, sweep and vacuum floors, mop floors, and refinish floors when needed. Waste disposal is managed by the appropriate party and typically includes the following categories – municipal waste, hazardous waste, radioactive waste, biological waste, and sharps. Each waste category must be handled and managed according to established procedures and work practices.

The following outlines the responsibilities of each party involved in this effort.

### **Responsibilities of Laboratory Personnel**

Laboratory personnel have a responsibility to manage their activities to eliminate or minimize hazards and to provide a safe working environment for persons who have a need to enter their laboratory. It is important for laboratory personnel to recognize that other personnel will not be familiar with laboratory activities and may not understand what is being disposed of.

- Laboratory personnel must keep floors free of obstructions and hazards to allow Building Services personnel to service the laboratory and keep the floors cleaned. Building Services personnel will not pick up sharps from the floor, such as broken glass, glass pipets, plastic pipet tips, glass capillary tubes, razor blades and other related sharps.
- All spills and hazardous materials must be cleaned up by laboratory personnel or, if necessary, with assistance from Environmental Health and Safety personnel. Floors, working surfaces, and equipment must be free of any hazardous residues.
- Make sure the materials placed in the municipal waste are suitable for this type of disposal, especially:
  - Do not place any liquids in the municipal waste.
  - Empty or rinsed containers must be free of any hazardous residue and be marked “empty”.
  - All sharps must be in an appropriate, puncture-resistant container to prevent injuries.
  - If a material can be mistaken as a hazardous, radioactive, or biological waste, but is not, it must be identified as non-hazardous.
- Building Services will dispose of glass if it is cleaned of any hazardous materials and is properly packaged. The total weight must not exceed 40 pounds and the container must be able to be easily and safely handled by Building Services personnel.

- For all other types of waste, make sure the container is appropriately labeled and separated from municipal waste:
- Hazardous waste - manage hazardous wastes in accordance with the UI Hazardous Materials Management & Disposal Policy & Procedures manual (<http://www.uidaho.edu/safety/hazframe.htm>). This type of waste may only be removed by Environmental Health and Safety personnel.
- Radioactive waste - manage radioactive wastes in accordance with the UI Radiation Safety Manual (<http://www.uidaho.edu/safety/radframe.htm>). This type of waste may only be removed by Environmental Health and Safety personnel.
- Biological waste - biological wastes that are not destroyed (e.g., incineration) must be disinfected prior to disposal. Please follow these procedures:
  - Biological wastes that are to be autoclaved and disposed of in the municipal waste must not be placed in “red bags”. Red bags should only be used for wastes that are to be incinerated.
  - Autoclaved waste placed in the municipal waste must have some indication on the bag that it has been autoclaved or sterilized.
  - Laboratory personnel are responsible for safely transporting biological waste to the incinerator or to the municipal waste dumpsters located outside of the building.
- Sharps - Sharps are objects, such as broken glass, needles, scalpel blades, glass pipettes, plastic pipette tips, etc., that could cause injury and/or puncture or cut through the waste container liner. For the safety of all people involved, never place these objects in the waste container by themselves. Always place them in a cardboard, plastic, metal, or other appropriate, puncture-resistant container before placing them in the waste container. This applies to all categories of waste. Do not use the red biohazardous plastic sharp containers unless they are to be incinerated.

### **Responsibilities of Building Services Personnel**

- Building Services personnel should review the activities and waste practices of each laboratory with laboratory personnel to ensure that everyone understands where and what hazards are present, what services will be provided, and where the wastes are located.
- Personal protection - Building Services personnel should wear, at a minimum, safety goggles, gloves, and disposable aprons when working in a laboratory.
- If you notice a hazardous situation (e.g., spill on floor, hazardous materials in the municipal waste, sharps not properly packaged, etc.), contact your supervisor. The supervisor should discuss the situation with laboratory personnel or leave a discrepancy notice.

### **Responsibilities of Environmental Health and Safety Personnel**

- Develop procedures for disposing of wastes that may be hazardous.
- Timely removal of hazardous and radioactive wastes.
- Provide assistance for the clean-up of hazardous spills, if necessary.