Disposal of Laboratory Waste

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1 Purpose
The University of Greenwich has guidelines for hazardous waste disposal.

This document details the procedure by which different categories of waste are disposed. Some laboratory waste may be disposed of by landfill via the skips on campus, whilst other waste must be labelled and placed in CS003, the waste chemical store. The key to CS003 may be obtained from the keypress in B106. All waste taken to CS003 must be accompanied by a Waste Disposal Form.

It is the responsibility of the Lab Managers and users to make sure that the waste is placed in the correct sacks and disposed of responsibly.

Yellow Tiger Striped Sacks - contaminated lab waste: cloths, paper towels, filter papers, plastic ware (disposable tubes etc. but no sharp ended objects), disposable gloves etc contaminated with chemicals classed as hazardous, irritant or toxic. Collected by the cleaning staff and taken to the Hazardous Waste bin in the locked compound by the Link Building. Facilities Management arrange for disposal via contractor on fortnightly basis.

Yellow Sacks - clinical and other incineration waste (eg pesticide waste). Must be placed in incinerator waste bin in locked compound between Nelson and Anson. The key to the bin and compound padlock may be obtained from the keypress in B106. Waste Disposal Form must be completed and placed in file in B162 – waste given next consecutive reference number.

Yellow Sharps Containers/Cin Bin - for needles and other sharps. Must be placed in incinerator waste bin in locked compound between Nelson and Anson. Keys to the bin and compound padlock held by Dudley Farman and Waste Disposal Form must be completed and placed in file in B162 – waste given next consecutive reference number.

Clear Autoclave Bags - for material that needs to be autoclaved. Bags must be labelled with details of material requiring autoclaving. Once autoclaved double bag and transfer to Black Sack.

Black Sacks - non-hazardous, non-recyclable waste: Contaminated food containers, used, disposable gloves (not contaminated with microbial contamination or any hazardous chemicals), plants, insect diets, uncontaminated washcloths, autoclaved waste (unless contaminated with hazardous materials). Collected daily by cleaning staff. Any large, heavy sacks or accumulated autoclaved waste can be collected on request to Facilities Management.
Clear Sacks - recyclable waste: Paper, cardboard, clean plastic (including non-contaminated plastic pipettes, pipette tips, plastic test tubes or centrifuge tubes), handwash towels, paper towels used for wiping with solvents, clean aluminium foil. Collected daily by cleaning staff.

Waste Recyclable Metal - can be placed in a suitable container and collected for recycling by contacting the Head Caretaker through Facilities Management.

Glass Waste - currently all glass, including broken or lightly contaminated glass, is to be placed into the rigid yellow glass bins and the bins collected on request to Facilities Management.

- Any microbiologically contaminated glass should be autoclaved as for microbiological waste and then placed in the yellow glass bin. Any microbiologically contaminated glass microscope slides must be placed into lidded jars of 1% Virkon prior to autoclaving. Once autoclaved the glass slides can be disposed of in the yellow glass bins.
- Waste such as glass sample vials (with aluminum caps and rubber septa still in place) or chemically contaminated plastic pipette tips (or similar sharp plastic ware) should also be placed into yellow glass bins.
- Other forms of contamination should be treated according to type of contamination.

2 Chemicals
2.1 When disposing of chemicals please refer to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the chemical in question and look at the disposal instructions. Non-hazardous chemicals may be sent for landfill with the permission of the laboratory manager/supervisor.
2.2 All other chemicals that are surplus to requirements or are past their use by date must be placed in CS003 with the Waste Disposal Form. They must be clearly labelled and safely packaged so they present no danger to any person handling them. If in doubt about the safety of a chemical consider it to be in the worst case scenario. Cliff Birchall periodically calls the waste disposal company onto campus and will ask if we need our waste taken at the same time. A copy of the completed Waste Form must be placed on file in B162 and a duplicate sent to Cliff Birchall electronically.
2.3 Mixed wastes must be clearly labelled. Categories for mixed solvent waste may be found in the Appendix 1. Labels for solvents may be obtained from Dudley Farman in B162.
2.4 Empty Fisher or VWR Solvent bottles must be allowed to evaporate in a fume cupboard and washed before collection by Fisher or VWR. They must be returned with a waste-transfer form and copies of the form must be kept.
2.5 Appendix 2 gives guidance on chemical mixes which should be avoided. This list is not a comprehensive list and MSDS sheets should always be referred to when disposing of chemicals.

3.0 Waste Containing Live Insects
3.1 Waste containing live insects must be either frozen at temperature at or below -15°C for at least 24 hours or autoclaved at 121°C for at least 30 minutes.
3.2 This waste may then be disposed of in Black Sacks.
4.0 Microbiological Waste
4.1 Any waste that is contaminated or thought to be contaminated with microbes must be autoclaved at, at least 121°C for at least 30 mins prior to disposal.

5.0 Waste Generated for work under DEFRA Licence
5.1 All waste generated for work under DEFRA licence must be disposed of according to the terms of the licence.

6.0 Plant Waste
6.1 All uncontaminated plant waste may be disposed of in black Sacks.

All staff and students working in the Laboratories, Controlled Environment Facility and Glasshouse will have received training in Disposal of Waste and competence recorded on their Training Record. It is important that everyone in the waste disposal chain knows exactly what they are handling.

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