

DISPOSAL OF EMPTY CHEMICAL CONTAINERS

Empty chemical containers can contain residual amounts of chemicals. In an effort to ensure that this residue is handled properly and to be able to recycle or properly dispose of these containers, the following procedure has been developed by EHS in conjunction with OPP Custodial Services.

All aspects of this procedure will be performed by lab personnel except for the emptying of the recycling bins and the red or maroon glass containers, which will be performed by OPP Custodial Services.

Rinse procedure:

All chemical containers, liquid or solid, must be rinsed 3 times before being discarded. A rinse should consist of minimal water being sloshed around the container. The first rinse should be collected as chemical waste, it can be put into any waste container of compatible chemicals, the second and third rinses can then go down the drain. If the chemical is on the [list of acutely hazardous waste](#) then all 3 rinses must be collected.

Ensure that plenty of water is used to flush the material down the drain. After the containers are rinsed they can be discarded appropriately as described below. All caps should be left off of the discarded containers, containers should be labeled with “empty” labels (provided by EHS), and the chemical name should be crossed or blacked out prior to being discarded. Caps may be discarded into the regular trash.

Reuse/ Recycle/ Disposal of Cleaned Containers:

- All chemical containers must follow the above rinse procedure before being discarded in any form.
- EHS supports the use of empty chemical containers as chemical waste containers as a form of recycling.
- Metal containers or any plastic containers, plastic tubing, or plastic beakers that do not meet the recycling criteria (see below) can be discarded into the regular trash.
- Glass containers, glass tubing, or glass beakers that do not meet the recycling criteria(see below) or that are broken should be placed into the red or maroon plastic trash cans that are found in the labs for disposal.
- Plastic or glass containers that meet the recycling criteria should be placed into the appropriate recycling containers that are found in the labs.

The following criteria must be met for containers to be recycled: (Custodial Services will be placing blue recycling containers in the labs for the containers that meet these criteria.)

Glass (brown or clear):

- triple rinsed according to procedure (see above)
- dry
- uncapped
- non pyrex
- not used for mixing of chemicals
- no glass tubing may be recycled
- unbroken
- no plastic coating
- no visible chemical residue or stains

Plastic:

- triple rinsed according to procedure (see above)
- dry
- uncapped
- listed as grades 1- 7 on bottom of container
- mouth opening is smaller than base
- not used for mixing of chemicals
- no plastic tubing may be recycled
- no visible chemical residue or stains

If there are any questions or concerns please contact Kevin Myers at 814-865-6391 or at Myers@ehs.psu.edu.