



Chemical and Unwanted Material Management Reminders

As research continues to ramp up to pre-COVID levels, Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) has observed an increase in issues associated with chemical and unwanted material management. The following reminders are based on learnings from these issues:

- Biological waste containers should not be used for chemical disposal, radioactive material disposal or general trash. For assistance with disposal of other types of waste, please visit the [EH&S Waste Disposal page](#) on our website.
- Do not use trash cans for secondary containment of regulated waste containers, even for a short period of time. These items can inadvertently end up in dumpsters or other trash receptacles if picked up by Custodial Services.
- Spring and summer cleaning should include a review of any expired, old or otherwise unused laboratory chemicals. These items become costly to dispose of as they age and can pose safety hazards. Each lab is eligible for an annual lab clean-out. Please visit the [EH&S Waste Disposal page](#) for information on lab cleanouts and other waste disposal information.
- EH&S would like to remind researchers that over time, some chemicals can form explosive peroxides, which have caused multiple explosions at other institutions (e.g. [University of Minnesota](#), [UC Berkeley](#)). To prevent such incidents here, EH&S advises labs follow these steps:
 1. **Keep track of peroxide-forming chemicals.** Take advantage of the [EH&S online chemical inventory system](#) so you know what chemicals are in your lab.
 2. **Label and test all peroxide-formers.** See EH&S' [Peroxide-Forming Chemicals Guidance](#) for requirements.
 3. **Dispose of peroxide-formers before they become dangerous.** If these chemicals sit too long without being tested, EH&S may need to bring in an outside vendor to dispose of them, which can cost your department thousands of dollars.
 4. **Don't open, move or concentrate peroxide-formers which have not been tested regularly.** The peroxides may be shock sensitive and concentration of the peroxides can increase the risk of explosion. Contact EH&S if potentially dangerous peroxide-formers are found.

You can find more information on chemical and unwanted material management on the [EH&S website](#) as well as EH&S Department contact information for questions or concerns. For more information about peroxide-formers, their hazards, and the requirements for testing and disposal, see EH&S' [Peroxide-Forming Chemicals Guidance](#).