

## HAZARDOUS WASTE PROCEDURES

Both Harvard (as an institution) and Northwest Building Researchers (as individuals) are responsible for complying with the [federal](#) and [state](#) regulations governing the management and disposal of hazardous waste.

Harvard's hazardous waste program is managed by Harvard Environmental Health & Safety and is detailed [here](#). Aspects of this program that are especially relevant to occupants of North West building are highlighted below.

### Sinks and Drains

The [Massachusetts Water Resources Authority](#) closely monitors Harvard's sink/drain discharge. The following substances cannot be poured down the drain:

- - Acetone
- - Organic solvents or chemicals
- - Mercury or other heavy metals
- - Strong acids (solutions with pH < 5.5)
- - Strong bases (solutions with pH > 12.0)
- - Malodorous substances
- - Hazardous waste
- - Infectious/biological waste
- - Radioactive material

Further guidance on the sink disposal of chemical substances can be found [here](#).

### Key Hazardous Waste Guidelines

1. *Set up hazardous waste containers "at or near" the point of waste generation.*  
Do not place hazardous waste containers in sinks.
2. *All hazardous waste containers must reside in a [secondary containment bin](#).*  
This will help ensure that spills, leaks, and container over-pressurizations are safely contained.
3. *Hazardous waste containers must be closed with a cap when not actively receiving material.*  
Funnels should not be left in hazardous waste containers even momentarily.
4. *Each hazardous waste container must have a [hazardous waste label](#) affixed and properly filled out.*
5. *Incompatible hazardous waste (e.g. acidic and basic waste) must be placed in separate waste containers that reside in separate secondary containers.*  
This is especially applicable to nitric acid and organic solvents.
6. *Nothing other than hazardous waste containers should reside in a hazardous waste secondary containment bin.*
7. *When a hazardous waste container is ready to be taken away, enter the date on the tag and transfer to your group's Main Accumulation Area (hazardous waste cabinet).*

### Hazardous Waste Tips

1. *Use 5-gallon plastic containers for waste solvents.*  
Accumulating waste solvents in 5-gallon plastic containers saves money and reduces the need for costly waste packaging prior to shipment.
2. *Use plastic containers for the accumulation of corrosive wastes.*  
Acids, bases, metal salts, bleach, and aqueous waste solutions should be collected in plastic containers. The use of metal containers with these waste streams results in corroded containers that leak, compromise safety, and necessitate spill response efforts.
3. *Don't overstock chemicals – see what is available, order what is needed.*  
Do not apply bulk purchasing cost-saving logic to the purchase of chemicals. Overstocking of chemicals eventually results in very expensive large-scale lab clean-outs. Evaluate current lab supplies and order the minimum amount needed.
4. *Label all chemicals to prevent the disposal of "unknowns."*  
Ensure all reagent and squeeze bottles, vials, flasks, and waste containers are labeled appropriately. Unidentified materials must undergo analytical testing before disposal, which can more than quadruple disposal costs.