

Safety Bulletin



University of Wyoming Safety

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Disposal of Laboratory Glassware

Proper Precautions

The proper method for laboratories to dispose of broken glass and/or sharps is to place it in a rigid box or container, label and seal the box to prevent it from opening and causing injury while it is being handled, and for lab personnel to bring their sharps/broken glass box to the dumpster and place the box inside the dumpster.

It is important to place the sealed box inside the dumpster and not put it to the side of the dumpster. The reason for this is that the boxes get wet and fall apart when the garbage personnel try to pick it up. This presents a potential danger to these individuals.

Lab personnel, not custodians are responsible for placing boxes with broken glass into dumpsters. The box should be labeled "Broken Glass for Disposal". Do not fill a box so full that it can not be carried or lifted into the dumpster.

Broken glass and/or sharps should not be placed in a plastic bag. Broken glass in a plastic bag creates a hazard to those handling the bags, especially if the bag is black or opaque. There is a potential of the bag breaking while being carried for disposal to the dumpster or while the dumpster is being emptied and spilling onto the ground to create additional safety issues. Broken glass can seriously injure a person if it is not properly contained. Employees have been cut when encountering broken glass in plastic bags.

Broken glass should not be placed in containers for resource recovery (recycling) purposes. This is very dangerous to those who handle the plastic bags. Window glass, plate glass, dishware, light bulbs, mirrors, Pyrex glass, beakers and other glass lab supplies are not recyclable and should not be placed in containers for resource recovery or plastic bags. Even if they are not broken, these items should be boxed, sealed and labeled for disposal.

If blood is involved, contact UW Safety department at 766-3277.



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