

Virginia Commonwealth University
Office of Environmental Health & Safety
Chemical/Biological Safety Section

Laboratory Closeout Procedure
(revised September 26, 2007)

I. Procedure for Laboratory Closeouts. Spent or waste hazardous materials should be disposed of routinely and not allowed to accumulate. Whenever a principal investigator or other researcher leaves the University or is moved to another laboratory space, the individual in charge of the laboratory must contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) to coordinate the disposal of all hazardous chemicals prior to leaving the space. The laboratory and/or departments are responsible for the proper handling and management of all hazardous materials. Disposal of hazardous waste accumulated contrary to university policy will result in charges for identification and disposal services being billed back to the generating department. Only those individuals with Hazard Communication and/or laboratory safety training should conduct laboratory cleanout and chemical handling activities. The following procedures must be followed when closing a laboratory.

A. The Chemical/Biological Safety Section (CBSS) of OEHS (828-1392) must be contacted to schedule a walkthrough and coordinate the disposal of hazardous chemicals in laboratories. The CBSS will provide an estimate for and coordinate the removal and disposal of hazardous chemical waste. The laboratory and/or generating department are responsible for disposal costs of lab cleanouts.

B. Prior to disposal, the researcher should make every attempt to transfer any usable chemical to other laboratories consistent with the university chemical recycling program. This saves the University money in purchase costs and is more environmentally friendly.

C. All chemicals must be stored in appropriate containers with their tops securely closed. The name of the chemical(s) and approximate percentage of each constituent must be clearly marked on each container. Unlabeled, improperly containerized, or unknown chemicals will not be accepted and/or will result in charges to the PI/department.

1. Research laboratories may not dispose of any hazardous chemical through the sanitary sewer system or regular trash. Such actions can result in citations and/or fines from regulatory agencies and adverse publicity for the University.

2. If during the course of the laboratory cleanout shock sensitive chemicals (picric acid, ethers, azides, etc.) are observed either in a dry state or with crystal formation, discontinue the cleanout and contact OEHS as soon as possible.

D. The laboratory manager must fill out and submit a Waste Disposal Form with the chemicals. Chemical waste, which does not have all necessary paperwork included, will not be

accepted. Complete information regarding chemical waste disposal can be found on the following URL: <http://www.vcu.edu/oehs/chemical/chemwastemanagement.pdf>

E. All laboratory equipment (refrigerators, laboratory benches, etc.) must be thoroughly cleaned to remove any residual contaminants prior to leaving. Any laboratory equipment sent to surplus must be cleaned and noted as such on the equipment.

F. All compressed gas cylinders must be capped and returned to the distributor. Lecture bottles that cannot be returned must be plugged and marked for disposal through OEHS. Empty lecture bottles should be marked as such.

G. Once the laboratory is cleaned and chemical waste is ready for disposal, contact OEHS at 8-1392. Chemical waste is accepted by appointment on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in Sanger B2-001. For large quantities, or other non-routine disposals, the department will be asked to provide a budget code and sign for approval/acknowledgement of charges being made back to the department.

II. Disposal of Infectious Wastes. The laboratory manager is responsible for ensuring all infectious materials and/or wastes are properly disposed of prior to vacating or transferring laboratory spaces. The CBSS does not accept infectious wastes for disposal. Further information regarding infectious waste can be found on the OEHS website at: <http://www.vcu.edu/oehs/chemical/biosafe/bbp.pdf>