

Pointers for Handling Radioactive Waste

1. Read and understand the Michigan State University Waste Disposal Guide. This document should be located in your laboratory.
2. If you need an empty container, but have no waste to be picked up, photocopy the form in the Waste Disposal Guide. Fax or mail it to the ORCBS stating that this is a container request, and ask for the number of containers you need.
3. As soon as you receive the containers in your lab, fill out the bottom part of the back side of the waste tag. This information identifies your laboratory, including room number, building name, phone number, principal investigator and the signature of a radiation worker.
4. A separate container must be used for each isotope you will be using, with the exception of ^3H & ^{14}C ; these isotopes can be mixed in the same container.
5. You must separate the solids and the liquids. Under no circumstance should liquids be placed in the solid waste or solid material placed in the liquid waste.
6. You must have secondary containment for your liquid radioactive waste container(s), in case of a leak or there is some spillage when filling the container, or rupture of the container.
7. Record the isotope, activity, date and initials every time material is added to the waste container(s). Each pair of gloves or pipette tip need not be manifested, but there should be an entry for each experiment or day that material is added.
8. Be sure to list the chemical components of the liquid waste on the back of the waste tag. Put the chemical name followed by the percent "by volume" or other units to quantify that chemical. This helps the ORCBS determine how to route the waste.
9. Fill the liquid container(s) only to 3 inches from the top. Overfilling the containers could present a hazard to the lab as well as the ORCBS personnel. When the container is full, photocopy and fill out the form on Page 14 of the Waste Disposal Guide and fax or mail it to the ORCBS requesting a pickup. Please complete the form for each solid, liquid, animal or vial waste you want picked up, and put the isotope and activity for each container.
10. Mixed waste (waste that is both radioactive and chemically hazardous), must be disposed of within 90 days of filling in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resources regulations. This includes scintillation vial waste that contains flammable cocktail or liquids that are more than 15% of a listed chemical waste. (We will be glad to help you determine whether waste is mixed.)

NOTE: Containers that are overfilled, are contaminated on the outside, have incomplete tag information and/or improper waste containers will not be picked up until the problem is corrected.