

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 05-006	
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BIOLOGICAL WASTE DISPOSAL

1. SCOPE

All biological, infectious, or pathological waste, including wastes potentially contaminated with recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, generated at the University of Pittsburgh must be properly disposed. NO biological, infectious, or pathological wastes are permitted to leave the premises or control of the Principal Investigator without first being disinfected or sterilized to ensure that the waste presents no harm to others or the environment. As with other classifications of waste, the responsibility for the identification, segregation, and handling of biological waste within the University rests with the generator. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) is available to provide technical guidance, assistance, and information regarding the proper handling and disposal of biological materials.

2. GENERAL

EH&S arranges for the weekly pickup and transport of biological waste materials from various University locations on the Pittsburgh Campus. The weekly pickup is conducted every Thursday, starting at 8:00am, and proceeds until completion. In the event that a University holiday falls on a pickup day, the pickup will be rescheduled on a case-by-case basis (usually on the preceding Wednesday). Refer to the EH&S website for the latest version of the [biological waste pickup schedule](#).

2.1 Supplies

- **Biological waste boxes:** EH&S supplies biological waste boxes free of charge at the various weekly University pickup locations or to specific users upon request. University drivers will deliver boxes on biological waste pickup days. The use of these boxes is REQUIRED for the proper transport and disposal of all biological waste.
- **Biological waste bags:** Red biological waste bags can be purchased through the Dietrich School Scientific Stockroom by calling 412-624-8551 (or 412-624-4260) and providing a Pitt Account number. The stockroom will deliver the bags directly. These bags are sized to fit the large University-supplied biological waste boxes. If biological waste bags are purchased from an alternate source, the bags must meet ASTM D1709-04 and D1922-06a test criteria, must be labeled with the biohazard symbol, and should be red or orange in color.
- **Sharps containers:** Sharps containers can be purchased through the Biological Sciences Stockroom by calling 624-4275 and providing a Pitt Account number. Sharps containers may also be purchased through Fisher Scientific or another vendor of choice.

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- **Biological waste labels (for biological waste boxes):** EH&S provides Pitt biological waste Labels free to University users upon request. Labels can be delivered by University driver on biological waste pickup days, sent by campus mail, or picked up at the EH&S office (Jerome Cochran Public Safety Building, 4th Floor).
- **Small biological spill kits and disinfectants (e.g. Lysol and Clorox Bleach):** These materials are available for purchase through the Facilities Management Stockroom by calling 412-383-3191 (or 412-383-3192) and providing a Pitt account number. The stockroom will deliver them to the caller.

3. HANDLING OF BIOLOGICAL WASTES

3.1 Solid Biological Waste

Solid wastes, such as plastic culture plates, should be disposed in approved biological waste bags. Solid, plastic waste used during manipulation of or that contact potentially infectious material should be disinfected with an appropriate disinfectant prior to disposal of the solid waste in approved biohazardous bags.

Aerosol cans should **not** be disposed of in biological waste bags. Information on aerosol can disposal can be found in the [University Guideline for Aerosol Can Disposal](#).

Solid wastes, such as disposable lab coats or gowns, gloves and other articles of personal protective equipment (PPE) without gross contamination should be disposed in approved biohazardous bags prior to leaving the biohazardous area.

Solid wastes suitable for autoclaving (121 ° C for 60-90 minutes) should be treated in this manner prior to removal from the premises or control of the Principal Investigator(s).

All biological waste bags should be placed or contained in approved University-supplied biological waste boxes (labeled with a Pitt biological waste label), and the boxes should be sealed with packing tape, labeled with a completed Pitt biological waste label, and placed in designated areas of the building for pickup. No more than 30 pounds of biological waste should be placed in a single box.

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3.2 Liquid Biological Waste

Liquid wastes (blood, bacterial or viral stocks, cell culture waste, etc.) should be carefully poured or collected into a receptacle containing an appropriate EPA-registered disinfectant to inactivate potentially infectious materials. Appropriate disinfectants include at least 1:10 dilution of bleach and other EPA-registered disinfectants. The appropriate disinfectant should be selected based on complete inactivation of the agent and EH&S can be contacted (412-624-9505) to determine the appropriate disinfectant for the agent.

Following sufficient contact time, the disinfected solution should be poured directly down the drain. This should be done carefully to avoid splashing and aerosol generation. The drain should be flushed with disinfectant of sufficient quantity to at least fill the trap.

Large volumes of liquid wastes should be autoclaved prior to disposal down the drain.

3.3 Sharps

Refer to the [Sharps Disposal Guidelines](#) for more information.

4. HANDLING OF PATHOLOGICAL WASTE

Pathological waste is defined as waste material consisting of only human remains, anatomical parts, and/or tissue. This type of waste should be collected in approved biological waste bags. The bags should be closed on a daily basis and placed in an approved biological waste box. The box should be sealed with packing tape and "PATHOLOGICAL WASTE" should be written on the top and side of the box in large letters using a permanent marker, and the box should be placed in the designated areas of the building for pickup. If the waste could become odorous prior to pickup, storage in an approved cold storage or freezer prior to packaging may be necessary.