

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 06-002	
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Disposal of Lasers

When a laser is no longer needed it must be transferred to another user who is trained and approved for the particular class of laser, sold, donated (consistent with University Policy) or properly disposed. It is advisable to contact the manufacturer of the laser to inquire about return of the laser prior to disposal. Lasers can be utilized for refurbishment, or possibly for usable components.

There are also several companies that buy and sell used Laser Systems which are easily identified with an internet search.

If avenues for re-use of the laser are not available follow these steps to dispose of a laser:

1. Disengage power source and remove any hazardous materials such as mercury switches, oils, heavy metals, circuit boards, laser dyes, solvents and other chemicals that are contained in the laser system. These materials must be disposed through the University's Chemical Waste Program. Electronic components and circuit boards must be recycled through the University's E-waste program. Contact the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) at 412-624-9505 for information related to the Chemical Waste Program and/or the E-waste Program. In order to help identify hazardous materials that may be contained within the laser, it is recommended to review the manufacturer's laser system manual for 'CAUTION!' statements that may list hazardous materials.
2. Disable the laser device by either one of the two following methods:
 - Remove all means of activating the laser (remove the power cord and power switches), or
 - Destroy the laser hardware (such as the lasing medium) so it cannot be used again.
3. Properly dispose of any chemical, biological, or radioactive wastes generated from the laser activities. Contact EH&S for specific guidance.
4. Provide a written statement to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety that any hazardous materials have been properly disposed of and the laser system inactivated prior to disposal. This statement will include the PI/Faculty, building and lab room number, laser manufacturer and model number so that the laser can be removed from the laser inventory.