



How Should My Laboratory Handle Empty Chemical Containers?

- Empty chemical containers may be considered a hazardous waste unless managed properly.
- Every container must be completely empty before the container itself is no longer considered a hazardous waste.
- Exception to the above rule: If the container held a material classified as “acutely hazardous” or “extremely hazardous” the container must be processed as a hazardous waste even if empty. ([List of acutely/extremely hazardous materials – P List](#))

Managing Containers:

- A container is considered “empty” when nothing can be poured or drained out; or when no material is encrusted on or adhered to the inside.
- The laboratory’s Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring their containers are managed properly.

To Reuse Containers:

- Empty the container.
- Before reusing container, make sure container type and prior chemical are compatible with intended reuse.
- Deface original label and re-label container with the new content information.

To Recycle or Discard Containers:

- Empty the container.
- If prior material was volatile, let any residual vapors dissipate within a fume hood.
- Leave cap off.
- Deface label (sharpie, spray paint, tape, etc..)
- For plastic/glass containers, bag or box up and place into a trash dumpster.
- For metal solvent cans follow the above steps through step 4 then submit an online pickup request form (<http://recycle.oregonstate.edu>) to Campus Recycling to schedule a metal recycling pickup.



Call Environmental Health & Safety (737-2273) for further information.

Empty chemical containers that did not contain an acutely toxic material are not considered hazardous waste and do not need to be picked up by EH&S. Follow the instructions above for disposal.

Contact EHS:
safety@oregonstate.edu
oregonstate.edu/ehs/
541 • 737 • 2273