



### How Should My Laboratory Handle Empty Chemical Containers?

- Glass chemical containers can NOT be recycled. They may be reused within the lab or disposed of.
- Empty chemical containers may be considered a hazardous waste unless managed properly.
- Every chemical 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](#))
- 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 below for disposal.

### 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 Dispose of 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 then submit an online pickup request form (<http://recycle.oregonstate.edu>) to Campus Recycling to schedule a metal recycling pickup.

### Broken Glass/Lab-ware:

- Deposit broken glass/lab-ware in puncture-resistant, sealed packaging (cardboard box), tape shut, label as glass, and place in building dumpsters. Broken glass kits are available from Chem Stores or commercial vendors.
- Broken glass boxes are NOT hazardous waste and EH&S does not dispose of them.

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

**Contact EHS:**  
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ehs.oregonstate.edu  
541 • 737 • 2273

# EMPTY CONTAINER DECISION TREE

