Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety (REHS)

Program Name:	Empty Container Management in Labs		
Responsible Executive:	Executive Director of REHS		
Adopted:	August 6, 2002	**Reviewed/Revised:**	October 8, 2020

1. **Program Statement**
   This program sets forth best management practices for properly disposing of empty used containers and glassware in laboratories. It applies to all intact or broken containers and laboratory glassware, including those that are chemically contaminated.

   This program does not include containers contaminated with:
   - Radioisotopes*
   - Regulated Medical Waste (RMW)*

   *Refer to the Radioactive Waste Program and the Regulated Medical Waste Program

   In addition, this program does not include recyclable glass, aluminum or plastic food and beverage containers.

2. **Reason for Program**
   The purpose of this program is to ensure that used containers and discarded laboratory glassware are properly and safely managed to prevent injury and environmental contamination. The program is intended to comply with the following Rutgers Policy and EPA regulation:

   - *Rutgers Hazardous Waste Disposal Policy*
   - *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act* (40 CFR 260 through 273)

3. **Who Should Read this Program**
   This program applies to all Rutgers faculty, students and staff who work in Rutgers laboratories.

4. **The Program**

   I. **Roles and Responsibilities**

   A. Lab Personnel

   1) Properly dispose of empty used containers in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section III.

   2) Always discard empty containers properly and NEVER offer them to students, staff or the community for any other use.

B. Custodial Services - Institutional Planning & Operations (IP&O)

1) Properly dispose of packaged containers in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section III.

C. Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety (REHS)

1) Pick up and properly dispose of empty containers contaminated with acutely hazardous waste.

2) Provide advice and guidance to lab personnel and Custodial Services on proper empty container disposal as needed.

II. Definitions

Acute Hazardous Waste	Also known as P-listed waste. These are chemicals that the EPA deemed acutely toxic to human health and the environment. They are listed in EPA regulations 40 CFR 261.33(e) and on the REHS website. Acutely hazardous waste may be a commercial chemical product, off-spec commercial product, spill residues, or the sole active ingredient of a formulation of any chemical bearing the generic name on the list.
Generator	Any person, by site, whose act or process produces hazardous waste that becomes subject to regulation.
Used Containers	Any empty container that previously contained a chemical or petroleum product. Containers include plastic and glass bottles, metal and plastic pails, plastic bags and bladders. These containers are considered contaminated until they are purposely decontaminated in accordance with this program.

III. Procedures

A. Lab Personnel

1) Remove or empty all materials from the container by using commonly employed methods such as pumping and pouring. Containers that are not completely empty will not be removed from the lab.

2) Rinse out empty containers that previously held aqueous liquids or solids. If the container previously held a hazardous chemical, collect the rinsate as hazardous waste. If the container previously held a material listed in the Rutgers Drain Disposal Procedure, the rinsate can be poured down the drain.

3) Place uncapped empty containers that previously held volatile liquids (i.e. solvents) into an operating lab hood overnight to allow the vapors to disperse. NOTE: Make sure the container is completely empty before placing in the hood. It is a violation to deliberately allow volatile liquids to evaporate in the hood as a means of disposal.

4) Request a pickup of hazardous waste for empty containers that previously held acutely hazardous materials (designated as P-listed waste). Do not attempt to rinse or otherwise decontaminate or discard these containers.

5) Request a pickup of hazardous waste for empty containers that are contaminated with residues that would be classified as hazardous waste if such residues cannot be easily removed.

6) Deface chemical labels by placing an "X" across the label using a thick indelible ink marker or similar method.

7) Secure lids on the containers before placing them into the appropriate disposal receptacle.

8) Place all intact and broken glass into a specially marked rigid container lined with a leak-resistant polyethylene or polypropylene bag. Specifications for the rigid container include:

   a. Fisherbrand™ Glass-Disposal Box – Tabletop Model (see Fig. 1)
   b. Fisherbramd™ Glass-Disposal Box – Floor Model (see Fig. 2)
   c. Any other brand of equivalent specifications
   d. Sturdy cardboard box labeled "Broken Glass" and securely sealed

Fig. 1 Tabletop Glass Disposal Box

Fig. 2 Floor Model Glass Disposal Box

9) Contact Custodial Services to remove full glass boxes for disposal in the general trash.

10) Place empty plastic and metal containers directly into the general trash.

11) Do not place any glass, plastic or metal containers originating in the laboratory into a recycling container.

B. Custodial Services

1) Dispose of sealed laboratory glass boxes in the general trash.

2) Dispose of general trash in laboratories provided the following conditions are met:

    a. Empty plastic or metal chemical containers have been rinsed, labels defaced and contain no residue.
    b. Empty glass containers are segregated from the general trash in sturdy boxes with a plastic liner. Glass containers inside the box are empty, rinsed and labels defaced.

3) Request assistance through Custodial Services supervision if containers are bulky and heavy.