Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What types of waste does the Environmental Services Facility handle?**

ESF only disposes of hazardous wastes produced by UBC registered waste generators. Non-hazardous wastes (such as garbage, glass, Styrofoam, lab plastic, e-waste, scrap metal, wood, cardboard packaging, etc.) are handled by UBC Waste Management (contact Building Operations Service Centre at 604-822-2173). If you have any additional questions about hazardous waste, please contact the RMS Environmental Advisor 604-822-9840 or an ESF Technician 604-822-1285.

2. **What are UBC hazardous waste tags and generator barcode stickers and how do I get them?**

For repeated waste streams such as: solvents, oils, non-regulated contaminated solids, and biological waste UBC has implemented a serialized, colour-coded, tag system that identifies the type of waste and allows for specific waste package or container tracking. The barcode sticker is a self-adhesive label that must be affixed to the UBC Hazardous Waste Tags on each container of waste sent to ESF. The barcode allows ESF to identify the Hazardous Waste Generators for waste tracking and legal purposes. Without the barcode sticker affixed to the tag, ESF may refuse collection and disposal of hazardous waste. In order to register as a UBC “Hazardous Waste Generator” and receive barcode stickers, tags, login the online Chemical Waste Inventory System (CWIS) and submit an order. For empty containers and additional questions, please contact an ESF Technician at 604-827-5389.

3. **How should I dispose of pharmaceutical drug waste?**

ESF does handle pharmaceutical drug waste, as per requirements of the “Pharmaceuticals and Controlled Substances Disposal” procedure.

4. **What is cytotoxic waste and how should I dispose of it?**

Cytotoxic waste is any medicinal product, chemical or chemically contaminated waste that possesses one or more of the hazardous properties toxic, carcinogenic, toxic for reproduction or mutagenic. This waste may include drugs such as: antineoplastic agents, antivirals, immunosuppressants, a range of hormonal drugs, etc. The term “cytotoxic” refers to the toxin target (i.e. the cell) but is not defined as a specific waste stream under both the BC Hazardous Waste Regulation and the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations. In general, this term refers to “chemical” toxins rather than “biological” toxins. The RMS case-by-case assessment of this waste stream is based on the toxicity (e.g. LD50), concentration and volume of the cytotoxics. Unused cytotoxic medicines and drugs may be returned to the pharmacy/vendor, or disposed of per “Pharmaceuticals and Controlled Substances Disposal” procedure. Other cytotoxic chemicals should be disposed of as chemical waste, per “Chemical Waste Disposal” procedure. If your waste is also biohazardous, please address that contamination first: i.e. decontaminate by employing a chemical or other appropriate method. If the biological waste (e.g. human anatomical/blood and body fluids, animal carcasses, or animal bedding) is contaminated with cytotoxic drugs refer to the “Biomedical Waste Disposal” procedure, or the “Animal Bedding Disposal” procedure.

5. **What should I do with empty glass solvent bottles?**

Empty solvent bottles should be triple rinsed and disposed of as laboratory glass waste. Note that these bottles are not accepted for recycling. Refer to the “Laboratory Glass Waste Disposal” procedure for details.
6. **What should I do with chemically contaminated glassware and plasticware (tubes, containers, pipette tips, etc)?**

If you need to dispose of glassware and plasticware contaminated with small amounts or traces of chemicals (e.g. phenol, chloroform, trizol, cytotoxic drugs), you must rinse the glassware or plasticware carefully with an appropriate organic solvent (e.g. methanol, acetone, etc). Then dispose of the glass or plastic plates, tubes and containers as solid waste. Also refer to the detailed “Laboratory Glass Waste Disposal” procedure. However, the waste solvents used for rinsing must be collected into a solvent waste red jerry can and disposed of as hazardous waste, per the “Organic Solvent Waste Disposal” procedure. Dispose of pipette tips in dedicated sharps containers per “Sharps Disposal” procedure. For questions, contact an ESF Technician at 604-822-1285.

7. **How can I dispose of empty compressed gases and/or propane/butane cylinders?**

Empty compressed gas cylinders, propane/butane cans and tanks of any size cannot be disposed of via ESF. It is the responsibility of generators and/or their departments to return them to the suppliers from which they were purchased.

8. **Can I send “road-kill” to ESF for disposal?**

No, please contact Building Operations Service Centre at 604-822-2173 to arrange for pick-up.