



Frequently Asked Questions

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

ESF only picks up and disposes of hazardous (biological and chemical) wastes produced by registered UBC waste generators at Point Grey Campus.

2. Who handles solid waste at UBC?

Non-hazardous wastes (such as garbage, glass, lab glassware, 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 or submit a service request online.

3. Who handles hazardous waste for off-campus research facilities?

Hazardous waste produced by UBC research facilities located at hospital sites (Vancouver General Hospital, St. Paul's Hospital, and Children's Hospital) is not handled by ESF. ESF can arrange for direct pick-up of chemicals by our approved external contractor. Chemical waste requests submitted online via the Hazardous Waste Inventory System (HWIS) for off-campus generators do not need ESF approval. Contact your local site coordinator for more information.

4. What are the UBC generator barcode stickers and how do I get them?

The generator barcode sticker is a self-adhesive label, based on your unique generator ID, which allows ESF to identify all UBC Point Grey campus hazardous waste generators for waste tracking and legal purposes. Without the barcode sticker affixed to each UBC waste tag and container, ESF may refuse the collection and disposal of your hazardous waste. You can order barcodes online via the online Hazardous Waste Inventory System (HWIS).

5. What are UBC hazardous waste tags and how do I get them?

For repeated waste streams, which do not need approval each time, such as: biological wastes, solvents, oils, and non-regulated contaminated solids UBC has implemented a serialized, colour-coded, tag system that identifies the type of waste and allows for specific waste package or container tracking. You can order tags online via the online Hazardous Waste Inventory System (HWIS).

6. Can I email ESF a list of chemicals, which I need to dispose of, if my lab is located on campus?

No, you cannot email ESF a list of wastes to be picked-up. You have to use the online Hazardous Waste Inventory System (HWIS) to submit requests and wait for approval and further instructions.

7. How can I dispose of pharmaceutical drug waste?

ESF does handle pharmaceutical drug waste. Follow the requirements of the "Pharmaceuticals and Controlled Substances Disposal" procedure.

8. How should I dispose of cytotoxic waste?

Cytotoxic waste is not defined as a specific waste stream under the BC Hazardous Waste Regulation and it is not classified differently than toxic waste under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations. Unused cytotoxic medicines and drugs may be returned to the pharmacy/vendor, or disposed as pharmaceutical waste. Other cytotoxic chemicals can be disposed of as chemical waste. If animal carcasses or animal bedding are contaminated with cytotoxic drugs they must be disposed following the appropriate disposal procedure.



9. Can ESF pick-up my laboratory glass waste for disposal?

No, ESF does not handle glass waste. Laboratory glass waste (broken, unbroken and properly decontaminated) is not disposed as hazardous waste. Lab glass is disposed as solid waste via Building Operations - contact the Service Centre for pick-ups and supplies.

10. What should I do with empty glass solvent bottles?

Empty solvent bottles should be evaporated in fume hoods, rinsed and disposed of as laboratory glass waste. Note that most of these bottles are not accepted for recycling. Amber bottle recycling is available in certain buildings – contact Sustainability for more information.

11. How do I dispose of solid waste contaminated with chemicals?

Solid waste contaminated with significant amounts of chemicals that cannot be rinsed away may be disposed as “Non-regulated contaminated solid waste” - this repeated waste stream must be pre-approved by our ESF team.

12. How do I dispose of chemically contaminated plasticware (plates, tubes, containers, pipette tips, etc)?

Dispose of plasticware contaminated with small amounts or traces of chemicals (e.g. phenol, chloroform, trizol, cytotoxic drugs) as solid waste in the regular garbage. If necessary, you can rinse the glassware or plasticware carefully with an appropriate organic solvent (e.g. acetone, methanol, etc). Collect the waste solvents used for rinsing into a flammable organic solvent waste red jerry can and dispose as hazardous waste.

13. How do I dispose hard sharp plastic (pipettes or tips)?

Hard sharp plastic capable of causing punctures or cuts may be disposed as sharps – however, disposal in this manner is a best practice and not a requirement. You can use plastic pails lined with sturdier bags or double bags. The pails and tied up bags can be taken by lab staff directly to the outside dumpster (not involving the custodial staff), then pails are re-lined with bags and reused. [Do not include any pipettes/tips contaminated with radioactive or biohazardous materials in the trash!]

14. 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 their departments to return them to the suppliers from which they were purchased.

15. How can I dispose of laboratory lamps and bulbs, including microscope lamps, which contain metal halides (mercury), rare gases, etc.?

Many types of lamps and bulbs are recycled via the Light Recycling BC program. Please take them down to UBC Building Operations Waste Management loading dock at USB, between the hours of 8:00am – 3:00pm.

16. 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.