Disposal of Laboratory Glassware

1. Summary/Purpose:

This policy details the minimum requirements and procedures for the safe packaging and disposal of laboratory glassware. Laboratory glassware is any item that could puncture regular trash bags and potentially cause injury to someone handling the trash bag. Laboratory Glassware includes clean and empty glassware, bottles, flasks, vials, and glass Pasteur pipettes not used with bio-hazardous or infectious materials or highly hazardous chemicals. Intact glassware that could potentially break during waste handling activities and broken plastic-ware that has the potential to cause injury during handling is included in this policy.

2. Acceptable Glass or Plastic Materials for Disposal

Remove/empty all materials from the container by using the methods commonly employed to empty the container (pumping, pouring, etc.). Empty containers, that contained aqueous based liquids or solid materials (i.e., acids or bases), are to be rinsed out. If the container previously held a hazardous chemical, the rinsate must be collected as hazardous waste. Empty glassware, that contained volatile liquids (i.e., solvents), may be placed into an operating empty fume hood overnight (without the cap) to allow the vapors to disperse. **Note: It is improper to dispose of volatile liquids by the evaporation method.**

3. Requirements for Disposal of Laboratory Glassware

- Glassware must NOT be disposed of in classroom common trash receptacles. The following are two examples of approved containers:

- Discarded glassware must be placed in a small puncture proof, double-lined cardboard box or a container specifically designed for the disposal of glassware.

- Any cardboard box may be used, provided it is properly labeled, sturdy and of a size that will not weigh more than 40 pounds when full.
- It is acceptable to use a plastic bucket with a lid in lieu of the trash bag-lined cardboard box.
- Label the outside of the container "Broken Glass Only." Ensure that the label is in a location that is readily visible to laboratory occupants.
- The glassware/plastic ware cannot be contaminated with hazardous material, including radioactive material (any amount), chemicals (more than a trace amount) or biological material (any amount).
- Laboratory glass must be appropriately decontaminated, where necessary, prior to disposal. Triple rinse and deface labels before discarding laboratory glassware containers.
- Once full, the bag top should be twisted and taped closed, and the box top taped shut. For plastic buckets, replace the container lid and ensure a tight seal. If the lid does not seal, then apply tape over it to keep the lid in place.
- Ensure that the label remains visible after the box/container has been sealed.
- DO NOT RECYCLE GLASSWARE CONTAINERS.
- Carry the sealed, labeled container directly to the dumpster outside of your building. Or, if you prefer, submit a work order for disposal by Facilities.

4. Glassware containers may only be disposed of in the University's standard dumpster with the following label conspicuously on outside of container:

CAUTION

LABORATORY GLASSWARE ONLY

DOES NOT CONTAIN HAZARDOUS WASTE, MEDICAL WASTE, OR PATHOLOGICAL WASTE OR RADIOLOGICAL WASTE

5. Prohibited items for disposal in a designated laboratory glassware box:

- Sharps
- Biohazardous Materials
- Hazardous wastes
- Chemical-contaminated laboratory glassware/plastic ware
- Empty glass containers that contained an acutely hazardous waste [Refer to P-Listed Waste]

6. Broken glass ware

Broken glassware should immediately be cleaned up. Each laboratory should be equipped with a small brush and dustpan to clean up after small accidents. Forceps or duct tape can be used to pick up the smaller pieces of broken glass.