### **Guidance Sheet 6: Hazardous Chemical Disposal**

The purpose of this Guidance sheet is to provide information on how to dispose of waste chemicals generated in science, material technology, food technology, art and other relevant areas in schools.

Effective disposal procedures and equipment must be used to control or reduce the risk from waste chemicals in the workplace.

All waste chemicals must be disposed of on a regular basis and should not be permitted to build up, expire, or otherwise pose a risk to the workplace environment.

Image of a spill kit

## Hazardous waste management

Chemical waste can be produced from many different activities in schools, including science laboratories, technology workshops and art areas.

Types of chemical wastes include acids, alkalis, or toxic laboratory chemicals, photographic chemicals, petroleum and degreasing based solvent, oil based paints, paint thinners, glues and adhesives. Chemical waste can also include chemicals that are no longer required, have deteriorated or have passed their use by date.

Waste products generated from hazardous workplace chemicals often have similar hazard characteristics to the chemicals from which they were derived. Because of their hazardous nature, the waste products need to be properly packaged, labelled and stored prior to disposal.

## Packaging and labelling

Waste containers must be labelled to identify their contents prior to using them as a waste receptacle. Ensure all other labels are removed and replaced with the following, as a minimum:

* Product identifier e.g. organic waste, inorganic waste, etc.
* Name, address and telephone number of the workplace.
* A hazard pictogram consistent with the correct classification of the chemical (if relevant).

Chemical wastes must be packaged in containers that are compatible with the waste material. For example, acids and bases should not be stored in metal containers and corrosives should be stored in glass containers.

Containers should be leak proof and sealed with screw-on caps. There must be appropriate controls for waste chemicals in the event of a spill. These may include:

* Segregate according to major waste types, such as organic solvents, chlorinated organic solvents, inorganic chemicals, bulk oils (e.g. cooking or automotive).
* Do not overfill liquid waste containers.
* Do not mix solid and liquid waste.
* Do not combine organic solvents with toxic metal waste.
* Keep recyclable oils separate from oil contaminated with solvents, halogens, laboratory chemicals and fuels.
* Provide secondary containment, either by the provision of spill trays or by bunding.

Empty chemical packaging may only be disposed of in general waste if:

* There are no hazardous residues (attained via triple rinsing or evaporation)
* Any labels have been removed
* The lids have been removed

## Segregation and storage

The requirements for the storage of chemical waste are similar to the requirements for the storage of workplace hazardous chemicals.

Chemical waste is usually temporarily stored within the school laboratory or workshop where it was generated.

Storage requirements include:

* Using leak-proof containers with appropriate screw-on caps (to prevent the release of vapours).
* Keeping waste containers closed except when adding waste.
* Provision of drip trays or purpose built chemical storage cupboards / cabinets with inbuilt spill retention.
* Storage of chemicals in their respective Dangerous Goods Classes taking into account incompatibilities within a class.
* Fume hoods should not be used as designated waste storage areas.

## Hazardous waste disposal

It may be possible to neutralise acidic, alkaline, oxidising or reducing wastes in school laboratories where staff have the required experience and technical competence. However, if there is any doubt, the waste should be removed by a licensed contractor.

Schools should arrange, at least annually, a school wide collection and disposal of hazardous chemicals by a licenced chemical disposal company.

All EPA approved chemical disposal companies are permitted by the Department to collect and dispose of chemicals from schools. The EPA Prescribed Industrial Waste database can be accessed [here](https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/business-and-industry/forms/prescribed-industrial-waste-database).

A manifest completed prior to disposal will enable the licensed contractor to plan for the collection and disposal and to record chemicals that are removed from the school.

## Summary

1. **Package and contain hazardous chemical waste in appropriate containers.**
2. **Label hazardous chemical wastes.**
3. **Store and segregate hazardous chemical wastes into waste types and according to Dangerous Goods Class compatibility requirements.**
4. **Review chemical stores annually, and if required arrange a school-wide chemical waste collection.**

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**Further assistance** can be obtained by contacting the Department’s **OHS Advisory** **Service** on 1300 074 715 or [safety@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:safety@edumail.vic.gov.au)

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| **Chemical Disposal – Manifest** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **School Name:** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Contact Person:** |  | | | | **Phone Number:** | | |  | | | | |
| **School Address:** |  | | | | **Fax Number:** | | |  | | | | |
| **Suburb and Post Code:** |  | | | | **Email Address:** | | |  | | | | |
| **Additional Notes:** |  | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Chemical name & concentration**  **(if known)** | | **Container size**  **(L or Kg)** | **Number of containers** | **Total weight (Kg)**  **(must include container)** | | **DG Class** | **UN Number (if known)** | | **Packing Group (if known)** | **Physical State (Solid/**  **Liquid/**  **Gas)** | **Container condition? (good/fair/ poor)** | **Labelled? (Y/N)** |
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