

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 03-018	
Subject: DISPOSAL OF LABORATORY GLASSWARE	Effective Date: 07/19/2019 Review Date: 08/21/2026	Page 1 of 2

DISPOSAL OF LABORATORY GLASSWARE

Broken, used, or unwanted glassware is a common type of waste generated in the laboratory. Improper disposal of glassware can lead to the injury of those handling laboratory wastes. All laboratory glassware including empty containers, pipettes, slides, plates, tubes, flasks, and beakers should be properly handled for disposal.

1. Laboratory Glassware Disposal

Broken/used/unwanted laboratory glassware should be disposed in boxes designed for this purpose. These boxes, identified as broken glass boxes, can be obtained from the University's Dietrich School Scientific Stockroom (<http://researchservices.pitt.edu/facilities/scientific-stockroom>) or directly from scientific vendors.

2. Contaminated Glassware

- 2.1. Intact, unwanted glassware that has been contaminated with biological materials must be decontaminated using an EPA-registered disinfectant prior to being placed into a broken glass box. ***Personnel should not attempt to decontaminate broken glassware.***
- 2.2. Any broken or disposable glass items that have been contaminated with biological materials must be disposed as a contaminated sharp (similar to a needle or other sharp). These items must be placed directly into a sharps container and disposed as biological waste.
- 2.3. Glass that has been in contact with chemicals should be handled per the University's Empty Chemical Container Disposal Guidelines prior to being placed in a broken glass box. (<https://www.ehs.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/docs/04-019EmptyChemDisposal.pdf>)
- 2.4. Glass slides with fixed/non-infectious tissue should be placed in a broken glass box for disposal.

3. Restrictions

The following materials should **NEVER** be disposed of in a broken glass box:

- General trash (paper, paper towels, etc.)
- Contaminated glassware
- Sharps, needles, syringes
- Mercury-containing materials (thermometers, manometers, etc.)
- Biological materials
- Chemicals
- Radioactive materials

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4. Disposal Preparation

Once the broken glass box is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, follow the manufacturer's closing instructions and seal the top with tape. The broken glass box can then be disposed in the regular trash.