

# DISPOSAL OF LABORATORY GLASSWARE

Broken or unwanted glassware is a common laboratory waste that requires careful handling to prevent injuries. This includes items such as pipettes, slides, plates, tubes, flasks, and beakers. When disposing of broken glass, always use a brush and dustpan, tongs, or forceps to collect the pieces, then place them in designated glass disposal boxes. Departments are responsible for obtaining these specialized boxes for their labs. Typically, these containers come with a plastic liner and a sealable cardboard flap.

To ensure safe handling and maintain structural integrity, **NEVER** fill glass disposal boxes more than 3/4 full. This precaution prevents the boxes from becoming too heavy or unstable during transport and disposal.

## CONTAMINATED GLASSWARE

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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.

Any broken or disposable glass items that have been contaminated with biological materials must be disposed of as a contaminated sharp (similar to a needle or other sharp). These items must be placed directly into a sharps container and disposed of with biological waste.

Unwanted/broken glassware that was in contact with laboratory chemicals must be dry before they can be disposed of in a glass disposal box.

## RESTRICTIONS

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

- Contaminated glassware
- Sharps, needles, syringes
- Mercury-containing materials (thermometers, manometers, etc.)
- Biological materials
- Chemicals
- Liquids
- Radioactive materials

## DISPOSAL PREPARATION

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Once the broken glass box is ¾ full:

1. Secure the inner bag closed.
2. Using packing tape, duct tape or some other strong adhesive tape, seal the top cardboard flap closed.
3. Secure the box lid to the main body using strong tape.
4. Ensure the box is not more than ¾ full before (and no more than 30 pounds approximately).
5. Place the secured box in the hall to be removed.

**Note: boxes not properly taped and secured, or boxes that are too heavy to safely move with not be picked up by custodial staff.**

Contact [hazwaste@calpoly.edu](mailto:hazwaste@calpoly.edu) with questions.