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DISPOSING LABORATORY PLASTIC PIPETTES AND TIPS

This fact sheet addresses the disposal methods for plastic pipettes and tips used in laboratory procedures. Host nation, individual State, and military service component requirements may differ and are not taken into consideration. Those requirements take precedence in the event they are more stringent than the information provided in this fact sheet.

Plastic Pipettes and Tips

Used plastic pipettes and plastic tips are not medical sharps waste. They are not shaped in a manner that would lead to accidental puncturing of the skin, nor will they shatter or break like glass. Rather, a determined effort or extremely unlikely accident would be required to cause a skin injury from these objects. In comparison, a sharpened #2 pencil poses a greater risk of skin damage.

Chemical Solutions

Plastic pipettes and tips are used for dispensing a variety of laboratory chemicals. Once used, the waste plastic pipette tips are empty and are suitable for disposal with other laboratory solid waste (i.e., regular trash). Even if the solution dispensed is regulated as a hazardous waste (HW), the pipettes/tips meet the definition of "empty containers" and are not subject to HW management requirements under Federal regulations (40 CFR 261.7). The only exception to this rule are those items contaminated with acute HW, which require management as such (i.e., they must be managed to meet the requirements of 40 CFR 262.15).

Infectious Solutions

Plastic pipettes and tips used for dispensing infectious solutions become a regulated medical waste. These waste pipettes and tips may be discarded directly into appropriate red bags. The use of medical waste sharps containers is not required or appropriate.



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