



Highly Hazardous Chemicals and Chemical Spills

EPA Compliance Fact Sheet

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HIGHLY HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL WASTES

Certain chemical wastes must be handled by special procedures due to their highly hazardous nature. *These chemicals include expired isopropyl and ethyl ethers (these chemicals typically expire 6 months after the container is opened), dry picric acid, and dry 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine.* These chemicals can explode during opening or routine handling. A comprehensive list of highly hazardous chemicals can be found at the VEHS website. If you encounter these or other highly hazardous waste chemicals in your laboratory, leave them alone and notify VEHS immediately to arrange for disposal. Highly hazardous chemicals must NOT be handled by laboratory personnel.

VEHS Quick Facts:

- Highly hazardous chemical wastes must not be handled by laboratory personnel.
- Contact VEHS immediately if you encounter highly hazardous chemical wastes in your laboratory.
- Spilled chemicals and supplies used to clean spills must be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- Clean up spills when they happen or contact VEHS for assistance.



Expired ethyl ether.

Expired ether is one of the most common highly hazardous chemicals found in laboratories. Ether is extremely flammable and can form explosive peroxides after exposure to air and light. Since it is packaged in an air atmosphere, peroxides can form even in unopened containers. Therefore, it is very important to write the date received and the date opened on all ether containers. Opened containers should be disposed of through the VEHS Hazardous Waste Collection Program within 6 months. Unopened containers should be disposed of through the VEHS Hazardous Waste Collection Program within one year. Ether should be stored in the smallest container possible, away from heat and sunlight and any source of ignition, and in a flammable storage cabinet or refrigerator/freezer certified for storing flammable materials.

Your laboratory/department will be charged for the disposal of highly hazardous chemicals, since they are not included in the Hazardous Waste Collection Program budget. The charge will be the direct cost charged to VEHS by our disposal contractor. VEHS does not mark up the disposal charges for these chemicals.

HAZARDOUS WASTE SPILLS

Chemical spills must be cleaned up immediately. Spilled chemicals should be treated as hazardous waste. The materials used in the spill cleanup should also be treated as hazardous waste unless the materials can be decontaminated. Chemical spills that cannot be cleaned up by laboratory personnel should immediately be reported to VEHS after evacuating and isolating the spill area.