

Pathological & Pharmaceutical Waste Disposal Guide

Pathological Waste

- **Definition:** Medical waste that is derived from an animal or human body, such as recognizable body parts, organs, or tissues from biomedical research or medical treatment, surgery, or autopsy, and **disposed via incineration:**
 - Animal Pathological Wastes: Animal parts or materials derived from vertebrate animals during diagnosis, treatment, or immunization. Animal pathological wastes include animal carcasses, recognizable body parts, materials soaked with liquid animal blood, contaminated bedding, organs, surgical specimens, and tissues suspected of being infectious to otherwise healthy individuals.
 - Human Pathological Wastes: Human body parts removed at surgery as well as surgery specimens or tissues removed at surgery or autopsy that are suspected by a health care professional or researcher as capable of causing infection in otherwise healthy individuals or having been previously fixed in formaldehyde or another fixative then decanted/drained. Human pathological waste generated at SJSU is cremated by a licensed vendor
- **Procedures:**
 - Animal Pathological Waste: Store animal pathological waste separately from other biological wastes. Always store unfixed animal carcasses, tissues, and fluids in red or white biohazard bags then place inside secondary containment that is labeled with the international biohazard symbol on at least 4 sides. Double-bag in red (or white) biohazard bags if the first bag is leaking or becomes damaged. Only store bags inside dedicated OC freezers with labeled with an exterior international biohazard symbol. Contact college/department safety staff or EH&S to coordinate disposal through a licensed contractor via thermal incineration. Consolidate pathological waste bags inside hard-sided containers with the words "PATHOLOGY WASTE" or "PATH" on the lid + 4 sides.
 - Human Pathological Waste: Store human tissues separate from other biological wastes. Most human pathology waste at SJSU is cremated by the Willd Body Program to respect cultural traditions.
- **Time Limits:** All pathological waste must be removed from accumulation sites **within 90 days of initial generation.**



Pharmaceutical Waste

- **Definition:** Any unused, expired, or contaminated medication or drug that is discarded and **must be incinerated:**
 - Non-RCRA Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste: Non-RCRA hazardous pharmaceutical waste is any unused or expired prescription or over-the-counter drug that is not regulated by the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). While not considered hazardous federally, it is considered hazardous in California so must be disposed of via incineration. This destroys the chemical compounds by breaking carbon bonds, thus removing the chemical hazard and preventing contamination, misuse, or environmental damage through landfill runoff. Non-RCRA CA-hazardous pharmaceutical wastes include unused, partially used or expired prescription or over-the-counter medications in the form of capsules, creams, eye drops, lotions, powders, tablets, suppositories, and vials or bottles of liquid. Place inside white sharps containers with "incinerate" on the side.
 - RCRA Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste: Hazardous pharmaceutical waste is solid or liquid waste that contains dangerous or harmful chemicals that may harm human health or the environment if not managed properly. RCRA hazardous pharmaceutical waste may exhibit one or more of the following properties: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity or contain a federally listed chemical. Consult with EH&S to determine if the pharmaceuticals you are managing are considered RCRA or Non-RCRA hazardous wastes.
- **Procedures:** **Never dispose of pharmaceutical waste in the regular trash, down a sink drain, or down the toilet!** Segregate pharmaceutical wastes from other waste types. Dispose of RCRA hazardous pharmaceutical waste in black containers and non-RCRA hazardous pharmaceutical waste in white containers (view on the right). Label black pharmaceutical waste containers using a [SJSU Hazardous Waste Label](#). Contact college/department safety staff or EH&S to help determine hazard characteristics of pharmaceuticals and to coordinate proper disposal.
- **Time Limits:** Pharmaceutical waste must be removed from accumulation sites **within 90 days of initial generation.**

