

Virginia Commonwealth University
Office of Environmental Health & Safety
Chemical/Biological Safety Section

**GUIDELINES FOR
HAZARDOUS WASTE CONTAINER SELECTION**

Updated: 11/3/08

I. To safely manage waste in the workplace and elsewhere at VCU, proper container selection is essential to preventing accidents and unexpected reactions. Using an improper container can endanger personnel and the environment. These guidelines provide general information for selecting proper containers:

- A. Use only appropriate waste containers.
- B. Use separate containers for non-hazardous, hazardous, mixed, and medical wastes.
- C. Use separate containers for liquid, solid, and gaseous (pressurized) wastes.
- D. Select a container that is compatible with the properties of all the wastes (including any reaction byproducts) that will be placed in the container.
- E. Do not put corrosive or aqueous wastes in unlined metal containers.
- F. Do not put chlorinated solvents in polyethylene (plastic) carboys.
- G. Do not use steel cans (such as lard or coffee cans) as secondary containment for liquid wastes.
- H. Use separate containers for wastes that are incompatible with each other. *Reactions between incompatible wastes can create dangerous fumes or vapors, cause explosions and fires, and pose other hazards to worker safety and the environment.*
- I. Use separate containers for wastes that can be recycled or easily treated to prevent the generation of waste mixtures that are difficult and expensive to treat and dispose.

II. Hazardous waste containers should be kept in the laboratory's designated Satellite Accumulation Area (SAA). Laboratory personnel should ensure that hazardous waste containers are properly labeled at all times according to VCU's [Chemical Waste Management policy](#). For more information on SAAs and/or hazardous waste container selection, please see the CBSS website (<http://www.vcu.edu/oehs/chemical/>) or contact a CBSS Hazardous Waste Coordinator at 828-1392.