

NOVEMBER 2020

NIH Drain Disposal Guide



The NIH performs many types of valuable research in support of its mission. This research often requires the use of chemicals with a myriad of properties resulting in the generation of hazardous waste. The [NIH waste policy](#) requires that all wastes be reduced to the greatest extent feasible to limit any potential negative environmental impacts. The NIH objective is to dispose of chemicals via the waste management service and prevent hazardous chemical discharges to the sanitary sewer. Chemicals that enter the sanitary sewer can potentially interfere with waste treatment processes or pass through this system untreated. The current NIH waste management practices are to collect and dispose of chemicals through Chemical Waste Services.

The NIH Office of Research Facilities, Division of Environmental Protection (DEP), in coordination with the Scientific Directors and NIEHS leadership, has developed a guide to inform staff which chemicals can be disposed through the sanitary sewer.

Laboratory workers should consult this [Drain Disposal Guide](#) before disposing of any lab chemicals down the drain. **Only chemicals approved for drain disposal** by the Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) may be disposed of down the drain. **Surplus solid chemicals must be disposed of through the NIH Chemical Waste Services and not discharged down the sanitary sewer.** A list of [chemicals pre-approved for disposal via the sanitary sewer is available here](#).

When disposing of an approved chemical listed in the NIH Drain Disposal Guide via the drain, you must use the following procedures:

1. Ensure the sink to be used for drain disposal of chemicals is clear of all items.
2. The worker shall wear appropriate PPE (lab coat, gloves, and protective eye wear).
3. Turn on cold water and let run for about one (1) minute to ensure there is adequate flow of water down drain, no back up into the sink. Do not use the sink for disposal of approved chemicals if water does not freely flow down the drain.
4. Slowly pour material down the sink drain minimizing splashing.
5. Rinse out the material container to dispose of, recycle, or reuse.
6. Clean sink to ensure sink basin is free of material.
7. Let tap water run for about two (2) minutes after pour to allow the material to flush through p-traps.
8. Shut off water taps to sink.

If you are unsure if a chemical can be disposed of via the drain or if you do not see the chemical on the list of approved chemicals for drain disposal, do not dispose of via the drain and call DEP at 301-496-7990 for further guidance or use Chemical Waste Services for disposal.

Chemicals that are not listed on the approved disposal list within the Drain Disposal Guide may be considered for drain disposal; this is done through an application approval process that can be completed here:

<https://spapps.od.nih.gov/sites/DEPAuthorizations/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Please note that when pursuing this option, disposal via the sanitary sewer can occur only after an application has been reviewed and approved by DEP. Any questions regarding the Drain Disposal Guide should be directed to DEP by calling 301-496-7990.

TAKE ACTION



Introducing the New Chemical Waste Tag

A new chemical waste tag has been developed for use at the NIH. This tag was designed to suit changes made to hazardous waste regulations and to increase usability. Click the link below to view the new tag.

[LEARN MORE](#)

SPOTLIGHT



2020 America Recycles Day

Each year, the NIH celebrates America Recycles Day to encourage new and better recycling practices. Read the full article to learn about the activities available for America Recycles Day in 2020.

[LEARN MORE](#)

NEMS TRAINING

Did you know? All recyclables must be CLEAN and DRY. Failure to follow these rules can lead to contaminated recycling loads that become waste. To learn more about recycling at the NIH, please visit the [NEMS Training webpage](#) to view a short (20 minute) NIH environmental awareness training video.