

Guidelines for Polyacrylamide Gel Disposal

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to define requirements for appropriate disposal of polyacrylamide gels. The polyacrylamide gels and other materials that come in contact with these gels must be disposed of properly.

II. Introduction:

Polyacrylamide gels are commonly used in research. Although polymerized acrylamide is not regulated as a hazardous waste, polyacrylamide gels often contain un-polymerized acrylamide which is a toxic material that can produce a hazard when introduced to the environment. Use the following guidelines when disposing of polyacrylamide gels.

III. Disposal Guidelines

1. Polyacrylamide gels should be disposed through the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) chemical waste program. **Do not dispose of polyacrylamide gels in the regular trash or in red biohazard bags as biological waste.**
2. Polyacrylamide gels should be placed into a leak-proof bag. This bag can then be placed into the specified waste disposal container. Please note that a plastic bag must also be used to line the designated waste container.
3. A completed red and white Hazardous Waste label should be affixed to the container. Identify the waste as "polyacrylamide gel" and dispose through the VAPHS chemical waste program.
4. Gloves and debris visibly contaminated by the polyacrylamide gels should be placed in a separate sealed plastic bag. Place the sealed bag inside of the specified waste disposal container and label as above. **Do not use red biohazardous waste bags or any type of bag or box marked with a biohazard symbol.** Dispose through the VAPHS chemical waste program.
5. It is permissible to combine the polyacrylamide gels with ethidium bromide gel waste. Ensure that Hazardous Waste label notes that both polyacrylamide and ethidium bromide gel wastes are collected.

Contact the GEMS Program Manager at 412-822-3197 (cell 412-737-5955) with any questions regarding chemical waste disposal or for information on the designated waste containers to collect the gel waste.