

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 04-024	
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POLYACRYLAMIDE GEL DISPOSAL

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

1. Polyacrylamide gels should be disposed through the University's Chemical Waste Program. **Do not dispose of polyacrylamide gels in the regular trash or in red bags as a biological waste.**

2. Polyacrylamide gels should be placed into a leak-proof bag. Seal the bag and place the sealed bag inside a cardboard box. **Do not use red biological waste bags or any type of bag or box marked with the biohazard symbol.**

3. A completed orange WASTE CHEMICALS label should be affixed to the box. Identify the waste as "polyacrylamide gel" and process through the Chemical Waste Program.

4. Gloves and debris visibly contaminated with polyacrylamide gels should be placed in a separate sealed plastic bag. Place the sealed bag inside a cardboard box and label as above. **Do not use red biological waste bags or any type of bag or box marked with the biohazard symbol.** Dispose through the Chemical Waste Program.

Gels containing less-mutagenic (or non-mutagenic) stains (e.g. SYBRSafe, SYBRGreen, SYBRGold, GelRed, GelGreen, etc.) and/or unstained agarose gels should also be disposed via the University's chemical waste program. Follow the same packaging procedures outlined above. Boxes must be labeled with a completed orange WASTE CHEMICALS label identifying the type of waste (e.g. - "SYBRSafe Gels").

If you have any questions about the proper handling and disposal of polyacrylamide gels or other types of gels, please contact EH&S at 412-624-9505.