

Frequently Ask Questions

1. Why does the university have a Blue Bucket Program

Answer: The program was introduced to ensure the safe collection of clean lab waste items by our Caretaking staff and to avoid items that can puncture the bags and present a hazard to our Caretaking staff. Items that should only be disposed into the blue buckets are clean glass materials, either intact or broken (e.g. glass bottles, flasks, etc.), or clean glass and plastics with pointy edges (e.g. pipettes, pipette tips etc.).

2. What do you mean by “clean”?

Answer: Clean means:

- Free of any substance (liquid or solid)
- Washed, dried and/or autoclaved
- Unused items
- Not contaminated with biological hazards (such as blood, cells, etc.)
- Not contaminated with chemical/caustic agents

3. Surgical Pipettes (1ml, 5ml, 10ml, 25ml pipettes) are one of the most common blue-bucket items, are they acceptable in the blue bucket?

Answer: Yes, clean surgical pipettes are pointy and therefore should be placed in the blue bucket.



4. What should our lab do with the “Filter tip refill boxes”?

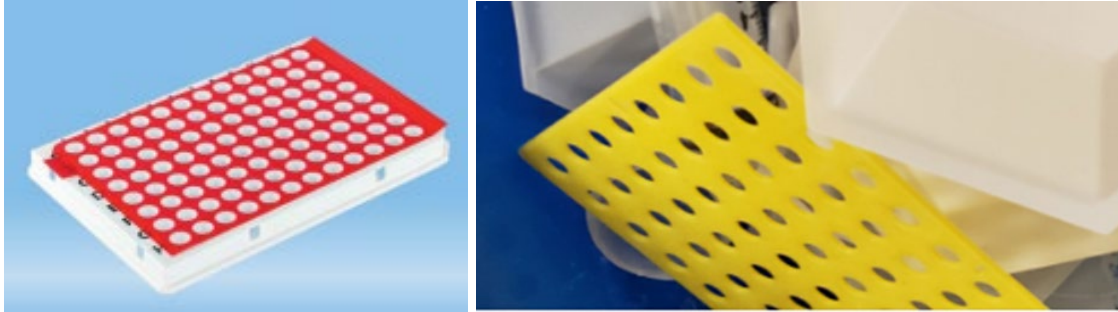
Answer: Almost all the filter tip boxes that we have encountered have contained a recycling symbol (either on the top right corner or the bottom right corner). If the box has a recycling symbol and is clean it should go on the recycling stream.



5. What should our lab do with the plate located inside the pipette boxes? The plate does not have a recycling symbol.

Answer: If the plate gets separated from the box (which does have a recycling symbol) then it can go on the recycling stream.

Please try to keep the plates in the box as you dispose it into the recycling stream.



6. What if my lab generates a lot of pipette boxes and we don't want to overtake the recycling stream from the 4 stream bins located outside my lab?

Answer: If you have a significant amount of bulky plastics generated (i.e. pipette boxes), please submit an ARCHIBUS work request and we will deliver a mixed recycling bin(s) for you to dispose the bulky plastic recyclables into. Please be advised the university does not provide garbage bins anymore as we want to become a Zero Waste Community. Please try to purchase items that are recyclable.



7. We have used 60 to 100-mm plastic petri dishes to collect samples in E3 water like saline solution. Do we have to wash and dry to put blue bucket or recycle bin?

Answer: Petri dishes do not belong in the blue bucket program as they are not pointy or sharp in nature. Petri dishes that contain biohazard or chemically contaminated materials must be disposed through Hazardous Material Disposal.

8. Where should plastic pipettes with cotton filter and filter tips go?

Answer: Clean plastic pipette tips with cotton filter and filter tips belong in the blue bucket program.



9. In the following statement: “If your lab has clean 4L glass jars, our Hazmat team will be able to collect them for reuse by other labs. It is very important that the jars are completely clean, defaced and that they have their respective lids/caps in place,” what does “defaced” means? Does the label need to be scratched or removed?

Answer: You must use a marker to write over the name and symbol pertaining to the hazardous material.



10. If we remove the rubber from the syringes (no needle syringes) can the outer casing go in the blue bucket?

Answer: The syringe does not have a recycling symbol, so it does not matter if you remove the rubber from the syringe, it still goes in the trash stream.



11. Where the weigh boats should go?

Answer: If the weight boats are clean and have a recycling symbol, they should go to the recycling stream. If they are clean, but do not have a recycling symbol, then they must go to the trash. Weight boats do not belong in the blue bucket program.



12. Where should I place clean micro-centrifuge tubes?

Answer: Clean micro-centrifuge tubes should be placed in the trash stream.



13. Where should I dispose of “Nalgene pump”

Answer:

Because the “Nalgene pump” pointy end does not pose a cut hazard to our Caretaking staff, it should go on the trash stream.



14. The new blue bucket change potentially allows for contamination in the recycling stream. In the old process housekeeping refused blue bucket waste if it didn't appear to be clean. No one is checking materials going directly into the recycling bins in the hallways.

Answer: It is not Caretaking's responsibility to ensure contaminated items do not end in the regular recycling and garbage stream. It is the lab's responsibility to always make sure they follow safety protocols and comply with the existing policies.