



Guidance Document for Recycling Materials in Laboratories

The amount of recycling that can be done in a teaching, research, or clinical laboratory is limited due to regulatory concerns about potential contamination of recyclable materials with biological, chemical, and/or radiological agents. **Recycling of contaminated materials can present a hazard to those engaged in the recycling process, may result in environmental contamination, and is contrary to federal and/or state regulations.**

Materials for recycling **MUST** be collected in a container clearly marked **“Recycling”**. As is the policy with all other waste in the lab, it is the responsibility of the lab occupants to properly segregate recyclable materials within the lab and dispose of them in designated areas outside of the lab.

Recycling is never allowed for materials in a BSL3/ABSL3 laboratory or vivarium.

Recycling of certain materials can occur in most other labs on campus, however, as specified below:

Paper

Most paper products found in the laboratory are recyclable. Examples include:

- Computer and notebook paper
- Catalogs
- Journals
- Newspapers
- Cardboard boxes

All paper products for recycling should be free of any potential contamination. You can not recycle paper towels, absorbent paper, paper used for laboratory bench protection, or any other type of paper.

Plastic

Only certain plastic materials can be recycled.

- Pipette tip boxes, lids, and wafers/inserts in designated bins on the Homewood and School of Medicine campuses only (only those racks which have been used in areas where splash or exposure to contamination is not possible **OR** have been washed clean and free of potential biological, chemical and radiological contamination).
- #1 and #2 plastic bottles which previously contained buffers or other solutions that did not include biological materials such as serum, growth factors, media supplements, etc. ***Labels of such bottles must be defaced with a lab marker or removed.***

The following plastic items can **NOT** be recycled.

- Pipettes and pipette tips;
- Labware including beakers, flasks, and tissue culture or microbiological plates dishes and/or flasks;
- Syringes and/or parts including those without needles that were used as cannulas or applicators; or
- Any materials that have come in contact with recombinant DNA, microbiological agents, vectors, animal tissues, tissue culture cells and/or biological toxins and have not been thoroughly decontaminated.

Glass

At this time laboratory glassware cannot be recycled due to the additives to make the glassware heat resistant and able to withstand large temperature fluxes.

For questions or to request more information about recycling in labs contact the Green Lab Specialist at sustainability@jhu.edu.

If you are interested in greening your lab, learn more about the Green Labs Program at <https://sustainability.jhu.edu/engage/get-involved/green-labs/>.