



University of Nebraska
Medical Center™

Nebraska Medicine

Universal Waste Plan

Basis for Plan

Universal waste is a subcategory of hazardous waste that poses a low risk to human health and the environment when handled and transported safely. Per state and federal regulations, the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and Nebraska Medicine are committed to managing universal waste in the safest manner possible, with concern for the individual and the protection of the environment. In Nebraska, the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) regulates universal waste in Chapter 25 of [Title 128 –Nebraska Hazardous Waste Regulations](#). UNMC and Nebraska Medicine are *Small Quantity Handlers* of Universal Waste.

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that UNMC and Nebraska Medicine employees know proper handling, disposal, and emergency procedures appropriate to the type of universal waste generated, handled, and disposed of at UNMC and Nebraska Medicine.

Definitions

Universal Waste

- Spent **Batteries** (rechargeable, button)
- Unwanted **Pesticides** (herbicides, insecticide, fungicide, rodenticides)
- Unwanted **Mercury-containing items** (thermometers, thermostats, etc.)
- Used **Lamps** (fluorescent (both plug-in and screw in), halogen, HID, mercury vapor, ultraviolet)
 - Low-mercury, **green tipped, or green writing**; non-ballast lamps are not regulated. Dispose of these bulbs in the regular trash.
- Unwanted **Electronic items** containing lead, mercury, and other heavy metals (electronic circuit boards, computers, LED lightbulbs, etc.)

Universal Waste Handler

Per NDEE, a universal waste Handler is a generator of universal waste; or the owner or operator of a facility, including all contiguous property, that receives universal waste from other universal waste handlers, accumulates universal waste, and sends universal waste to another universal waste handler, to a destination facility or a foreign destination.

Small Quantity Handler

A Small Quantity Handler is a universal waste handler that accumulates less than 5,000 kilograms (~11,000 pounds) of Universal Waste at any one time.

Training

Any UNMC or Nebraska Medicine employee who handles, picks up, moves, or manages universal waste requires training. It is their responsibility to transport the universal waste to its appropriate storage location, adhering to all the regulatory storage, disposal, and emergency response requirements. Training is required for new hires before they handle a universal waste. Contact EHS at 402.559.6356 for training.

A lab or office worker, who may generate a universal waste item, does not need to be trained but should contact the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Office for proper disposal of universal wastes.

Employees who handle universal waste must be trained annually, per NDEE regulations.

Universal Waste Storage and Disposal

Universal waste handlers must follow these regulatory requirements for the proper storage and disposal of universal waste.

Spent Batteries (Ni-Cad, Mercuric Oxide, Lithium, Lead Acid)

- **Leaking batteries**
 - Call UNMC Environmental Health and Safety Office (9-6356) immediately for pickup, storage, and disposal.

- **Non-leaking batteries**
 - Store all non-leaking spent batteries at the Universal Waste storage area in the container **labeled "Universal Waste – Batteries."**
 - **Date** the container logsheet each time you add a battery(s).
 - **Close** the container after adding batteries to the container.
 - **Tape the terminal ends of the batteries with electrical tape.**

You may set up a storage container in your area before transport to a universal waste storage area, provided:

- You label the container "Universal Waste-Batteries."
- You date the container with the earliest date that a battery is added to the container.
- You transport Universal Waste-Batteries to the UNMC universal waste storage area at the 4230 Building or the Nebraska Medicine universal waste storage area in Clarkson Tower within six months of the earliest date on the container.

Pesticides

- Call UNMC Environmental Health and Safety Office 402.559.6356 immediately for pickup, storage, and disposal of all unwanted pesticides.

Mercury-Containing Items

- Store all used mercury items at the universal waste storage area in the container **labeled "Universal Waste-Mercury."**
- **Date** the container logsheet each time you add a mercury item to the container.
- **Close** the container after adding mercury items to the container.

Used Lamps

- Store all used lamps at the Universal Waste Storage area in the container **labeled** "Universal Waste-Lamps."
- **Date** the container logsheet each time you add a lamp(s) (bulb) to the storage container and indicate the type of bulb.
- **Close** the container after adding bulbs to the container.

You may set up a storage container in your area before transport to a universal waste storage area, provided:

- You label the container "Universal Waste-Lamps."
- Date the container when you add the first lamp to the container.
- You indicate the type of bulb added to the container.
- You transport Universal Waste-Lamps to the UNMC Universal Waste storage area at the 4230 Building or the Nebraska Medicine universal waste storage area in Clarkson Tower within six months of the earliest date on the container.

Electronic Items

Computer components and other electronic equipment often contain small amounts of regulated heavy metals. Examples of this include leaded glass in computer monitors and lead solder on circuit boards. The NDEE regulates electronic items as universal or hazardous waste. Therefore, do not dispose of any computer, monitor, or computer component in the trash.

- **Computers**

Contact Information Technology Workstation Support (UNMC 402-559-7100; Nebraska Medicine 402-552-7777) to order new and surplus old computers. IT will determine if computers can be reused or recycled. If the computers are not useable, IT personnel destroy the hard drive and recycle the computer and hard drive as universal waste. UNMC personnel should contact General Supply using the Surplus Property Pick-up Form in eShop for computer disposal if so directed by IT.

Furniture Stores and IT personnel must recycle computers in the following way.

- **Label** a pallet or area which contains old computers and electronic items as "Universal Waste-Electronic items."
- **Date** the storage areas when adding the first electronic item.
- Dispose of Universal Waste-Electronic Items within one year of the date the container is labeled. The Sustainability Office schedules pickups with the contracted Universal Waste handler and maintains a copy of the disposal receipt.

- **Electronic Equipment**

Contact Furniture Stores using the Surplus Property Pick-up Form in eShop to dispose of electronic items.

Furniture Stores personnel must recycle electronic items in the following way.

- **Label** a pallet or area which contains old computers and electronic items as "Universal Waste-Electronic items."
- **Date** the storage areas when adding the first electronic item.
- Dispose of Universal Waste-Electronic Items within one year of the date the container is labeled.

Construction and Demolition Contractors

Universal waste generated from any contracted construction or demolition work must not be discarded as normal trash, even if the contractor utilizes the facility's trash bins. Contractors must dispose of universal waste per NDEE regulations and contact EHS at 402.559.6356 with the quantity of the disposed of universal waste. Language attesting to this should be part of the contractual agreement. Contractors must make arrangements with appropriate waste contractors to properly dispose of the material on their own. If this is not feasible, contact EHS at 402.559.6356.

Accidents and Spill Response

Avoiding Accidents

The main objective of securing universal waste is to minimize spillage and breakage of the material. Please adhere to the following storage requirements;

- Store universal waste lamps in their original containers or the round fiber drums.
- Place universal waste items carefully in the container to prevent breakage.
- Close the tops of the containers to prevent spillage in case the container falls over.
 - Tape the openings on the original containers. Failure to do so could lead to a violation of the regulations.
- Place all broken lamps in a separate container and tape the container closed.

Store all universal waste in an appropriate container. If the storage drum has a removable lid, ensure that the lid ring is in place at all times. Shrinkwrap all batteries or electronic items not stored in a box or container.

Spill Response

If the spill is small, contained, is not posing a significant threat to an individual or the environment, and you are familiar with the spilled material, you may clean up the spill yourself. Contact EHS at 402.559.6356 after the incident to discuss how to handle any spill residue.

If the spill poses a threat to an individual or the environment, call EHS during business hours (7:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) at 402.559.6356. If there is a spill after business hours, call Security at 402.559.5555. The UNMC EHS spill team will respond to clean up the spill.