



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

Environmental Health and Safety		
Title: <b>Universal Waste Handling and Emergency Response</b>		
Effective Date: 12/2006	Revision: 5/2019	Number of pages: 2

## PURPOSE

To establish standard operating procedures for the safe storage of universal wastes, and to establish emergency response guidelines in the event of a release.

## SCOPE

College wide

## DEFINITIONS:

**Batteries** considered a universal waste are described as a device consisting of one or more electrically connected electrochemical cells which is designed to receive, store and deliver electric energy, such as nickel-cadmium (Ni- Cad) and small sealed lead-acid batteries. The types of batteries used and collected for recycling at SUNY Optometry are alkaline, Nickel-Cadmium (NiCd), lead-acid, and lithium ion batteries.

**Pesticides** considered a universal waste are described as any substance or mixture of substances intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant or desiccant (other than any article that is an animal drug or animal feed).

**Mercury Thermostats** that are considered a universal waste include any temperature control device that contains metallic mercury in an ampule attached to a bi-metal sensing element, and mercury-containing ampules that have been removed from these temperature control devices.

**MCE** are any “mercury containing equipment” other than thermostats.

**Lamps** also referred to as “universal waste lamps” are defined as the bulb or tube portion of an electric lighting device. A lamp is specifically designed to produce radiant energy, most often in the ultraviolet, visible and infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum. Examples of common universal waste electric lamps include (but are not limited to): fluorescent, high-intensity discharge, neon, mercury-vapor, high-pressure sodium and metal halide lamps.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **I. Maintenance & Engineering**

1. Ensure all spent universal wastes are brought to the designated area in the sub-basement. All boxes shall be labeled as universal waste, and the date the waste was first put into storage shall be placed on the box.
2. All containers should be kept closed except for when adding waste. The storage area should be kept clean and dry.
3. It is important to prevent breakage of any lamp/bulb prior to disposal, in order to not release minor amounts of mercury into the air.
4. Notify the Environmental Health and Safety Officer at extension 5581 in the event of a release.

### **II. Department of Environmental Health and Safety**

1. The Environmental Health and Safety Officer will provide all personnel involved in the handling and storage of Universal Wastes with information pertaining to the employees' responsibilities for managing the waste, and their responsibilities for responding to universal waste releases.

### **Inquires/Request**

Environmental Health and Safety  
Room 3M05  
Office: 212-998-5581  
Fax: 212-998-5585