



Boston College Environmental Health and Safety

Boston College is subject to Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection regulations governing the handling and disposal of certain categories of wastes known as "Universal Wastes."

Universal wastes include:

- Lamps and Bulbs – those that contain mercury or, sometimes lead (e.g. fluorescent, high intensity discharge, neon, mercury vapor, high-pressure sodium and metal halide lamps). Boston College has been purchasing special, environmentally -friendly fluorescent light tubes, which are not subject to the special handling and disposal requirements of the Universal Waste regulations. These can be distinguished by the "green" caps on each end. *Fluorescent light tubes that do not have the green caps must be assumed to be Universal Waste.*
- Batteries - such as nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) and **small** sealed lead-acid batteries (electronic equipment, mobile telephones, etc.) *Larger lead-acid batteries, such as car, truck or forklift batteries are subject to other regulations (contact Environmental Health and Safety for assistance in disposing of these types of batteries).*
- Thermostats - that contain a mercury switch or ampule.

General Handling Requirements:

- Management – Universal Waste must be kept in containers or packages that are structurally sound, adequate to prevent breakage (for lamps), and compatible with their contents. Such containers and packages must remain closed and must lack evidence of leakage, spillage or damage that could cause leakage under reasonably foreseeable conditions.

For lamps - You must immediately clean up and place in a container any lamp that is broken or shows evidence of breakage, leakage, or damage.

For batteries and thermostats – Properly clean up and contain any battery or thermostat that shows evidence of leakage, spillage, or damage. *For additional information on Universal Waste container management, contact Environmental Health and Safety.*

- Labeling – Either the universal waste itself or the container in which the universal waste is contained must be labeled or marked clearly. **For lamps**, items or containers must be labeled "Universal Waste – Lamps". Broken lamps should be stored in separate containers labeled "Universal Waste – Broken Lamps." **For batteries**, items or containers must be labeled "Universal Waste - Battery(ies)". **For thermostats**, items or containers must be labeled "Universal Waste – Mercury Thermostat(s)".
- Accumulation time limit – Universal Waste may only be held for one year from the date it is generated. Universal Waste containers must therefore be labeled with the beginning accumulation date (i.e., the date that the first battery or fluorescent light tube is placed in the container).

General Handling Requirements (con't) :

- Training - Employees who handle or manage Universal Waste must be trained in proper handling and emergency procedures. Contact Environmental Health & Safety for training.

Additional Recommendations:

- Segregation - To reduce waste generation and labeling problems, avoid the placement of used and new lamps in the same container. Keep a separate box for waste lamps, batteries and other universal wastes.
- Storage in the building - If waste lamps are stored in a building for any period beyond the work shift in which they are removed, the box must be labeled and dated as discussed above.
- Removal - Arrange to regularly move the lamps and other universal wastes to the accumulation area (Warehouse) to avoid having multiple accumulation areas
- Box dividers – Use dividers in the waste lamp boxes. While more bulbs will fit in a waste box without the dividers, the bulbs are more susceptible to breakage without dividers.
- Contractor Universal Waste - Contractors are responsible for the management of any wastes generated by their activities. Contractors should not leave waste fluorescent light tubes loose in undesignated collection locations (mechanical rooms, stairwells, etc.). The lamps must be properly containerized and labeled as universal waste. Fluorescent light tubes, batteries and other Universal Waste generated by contractors may not be placed in Boston College dumpsters.