



# UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

The Dartmouth College laboratory safety newsletter

April 2021



DARTMOUTH  
Environmental  
Health & Safety

Specific questions? Ask EHS: 603-646-1762 or [ehs@dartmouth.edu](mailto:ehs@dartmouth.edu)

## Labeling Non-Hazardous Containers

EHS talks a lot about how to label hazardous chemicals, biohazards, radiation sources, etc.

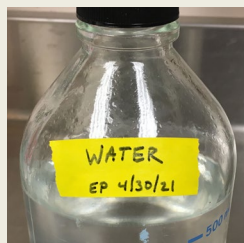
Why would we care about non-hazardous materials??

Imagine this: You're out hiking without cell service. A colleague back in the lab walks by your bench, accidentally knocks over a bottle and is splashed with the liquid. The bottle is unlabeled, so your lab mate treats it as an unknown hazardous chemical exposure, making notifications and seeking medical treatment, which involves your other lab members, PI, EHS, FO&M, Security, the fire department and the ER. You make phone contact two hours later and identify the container as just saline.



**Dangerous... or not?**

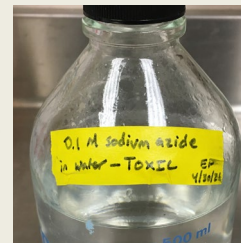
*Oh no! This is unlabeled!!*



Is it this?

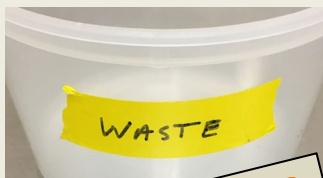


Or this?

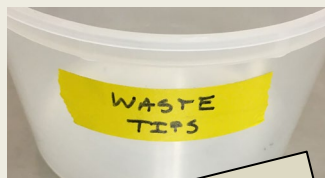


**Unlabeled chemicals are assumed to be hazardous until proven otherwise.**

A very common finding in current inspections is unlabeled or poorly labeled solid waste containers on the benchtop, usually bins used for pipette tips.



**BIOHAZARDOUS??**

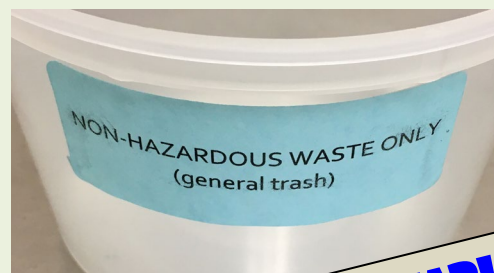


**CHEMICALLY CONTAMINATED?**

Are these hazardous? Our regulators might think so, and so might someone exposed to them.

**Unlabeled or incompletely labeled waste is assumed hazardous until proven otherwise.**

Non-hazardous waste containers should be labeled accordingly.



**CLEARLY LABELED**

This label makes it obvious that the contents are not hazardous. It doesn't have to be fancy – even just writing “nonhaz waste” on the container gets the point across.

*“ Containers should also be emptied at the end of the work period and not allowed to accumulate.*

*EHS Staff: Bree, Caitlyn, Erik, Jason, Jeff, Mark, Matt, Peter, Molly, Ryan*