To: QUT Staff and Students

Issued: January 2017

Alert #: 11

Subject: Laboratory glassware and chemical bottle disposal

Purpose: To advise staff and students on correct disposal of glass.

What happened

Laboratory glassware and chemical bottles were disposed of without the removal of residue or the removal/defacing of labels. Incorrect disposal of glassware and bottles introduces potential hazards for waste disposal contractors such as: exposure to toxic chemicals, injury resulting from an explosive atmosphere within the bottle and vehicle fire. Laboratory glassware and chemical bottles containing residues are classed as regulated wastes under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld), and must be disposed of by a licensed contractor. Disposal of unrinsed laboratory glassware and chemical bottles to general waste or recycling is therefore in breach of this Act.

Action to prevent future incidents

1. Reuse empty chemical bottles as waste containers and ensure the waste is compatible with residue and container

2. If disposing of laboratory glassware or bottles; triple rinse and remove/deface the label. Please note: the rinse may need to be collected as chemical waste (refer to Queensland Urban Utilities Sewer Acceptance Criteria for what can be disposed of via the sink)

3. All laboratory glassware, following residue removal must be disposed of via general waste, except where the glassware is classed as illicit drug apparatus or a controlled thing. Disposal requirements for these items are outlined in Appendix F, Sections 8 and 9 of the chemical management procedure. To confirm if your glassware is included in these categories, consult the high risk chemicals list.

If you are unsure of what to do, contact the ChemStore: chemstore@qut.edu.au.

Figure 1 - Labels not removed or defaced

Figure 2 - Laboratory glassware containing residue

For more information, please contact Department of Health, Safety and Environment: hse@qut.edu.au

Caring for our people and environment