Universal Waste Handling

What is a Universal Waste?
Universal Waste streams include all types of Mercury containing lamps, rechargeable batteries (non-alkaline), certain pesticides, and Mercury containing equipment.

How do I properly manage Universal Waste?

- **Mercury Lamps** – Includes fluorescent, metal halide, and halogen lamps that contain Mercury. Look for the Mercury “Hg” symbol on the lamp to determine if it is a Universal Waste.
  - Spent bulbs must be placed in a sturdy, closable container.
  - Container must be labeled with the words “Universal Waste Lamps” and dated when the first lamp is placed in the box.
  - Spent lamp waste must be disposed of within one year. Contact the UNCC Recycling Department for disposal of your waste lamps.
  - Lamps that are broken are a “Hazardous Waste” and must be containerized and managed in accordance with the Hazardous Waste rules. Avoid breathing dust from a broken bulb.
  - Note: Ballasts are not a Universal Waste. Ballasts containing PCB’s (pre 1980) must be collected by EHS as a Hazardous Waste.

- **Rechargeable Batteries (non-alkaline)** – Includes lead acid, nickel cadmium, mercury oxide and lithium hydride batteries.
  - Universal Waste batteries must be collected in a way to prevent leakage of their contents (i.e. secondary containment).
  - Universal Waste batteries must be separated from alkaline batteries.
  - Terminals are required to be covered in tape to prevent fires during shipment (where applicable).
  - Batteries must be labeled “Universal Waste Batteries” and dated. Either the battery or the container may be labeled.
  - Contact the Recycling Department within one year of the collection date for disposal.

- **Pesticides** – Any substance or a mixture of substances intended to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate any pest, or intended use for plant growth control.
  - Must be kept in its original container where possible.
  - Care must be taken to prevent large releases of Pesticide waste.
  - Must be labeled with the words “Universal Waste Pesticide” or “Used Pesticide” and dated.
  - Dispose of within one year of the date with the Environmental Health and Safety Office.

- **Mercury Containing Equipment** – A device or part of a device containing Mercury integral to its function. Includes thermostats, thermometers, barometers, manometers, gauges, and switches.
  - Collect and store Mercury containing equipment to prevent breakage and spillage of its contents.
  - Label with the words “Universal Waste – Mercury containing equipment” or “Used Mercury Equipment” and date.
  - Dispose of within one year of the date with the Environmental Health and Safety Office.

NOTE: Additional waste streams not classified as a “Universal Waste”, but required to be managed similarly include Used Oil, empty aerosol cans, and e-waste (discarded computer equipment). Contact EHS for guidance.