

OVERVIEW OF FACT SHEET

Universal Waste (UW) is a general term used to describe a subset of *Hazardous Waste* that is generated by a large, diverse population, including businesses and unregulated households. This term is intended to be broad so that a wider range of wastes may be managed under less stringent regulations than how other Hazardous Waste is managed. The UW rules are also meant to encourage environmentally sound collection and recycling or treatment of certain wastes.



This fact sheet provides general definitions of and proper management practices for the different categories of UW. Each category of UW has specific management practices that are regulated by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) regulations.



If you have any questions, please contact the [Environmental Health and Safety Office](#) (EHS) at 704-687-1111. We are available to assist with proper storage, labeling, and disposal of UW, in conjunction with the [University Recycling Office](#).

Universal Waste Handling

What is a Universal Waste?

Universal Waste streams include all types of Mercury containing lamps, rechargeable and non-rechargeable batteries, 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 lamps 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 lamp.
 - Note: Ballasts are not a Universal Waste. Ballasts containing PCB’s (pre 1980) must be collected by EHS as a Hazardous Waste.

- **Rechargeable and Non-Rechargeable Batteries** – Includes: lead acid, nickel cadmium (NiCad), magnesium, mercury oxide and all lithium batteries (Note: alkaline, carbon zinc and nickel metal hydride (NiMH) are not classified as Universal Waste)
 - Universal Waste batteries must be collected in a way to prevent leakage of their contents (i.e. non-conductive secondary containment).
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 - Terminals are required to be covered in tape (to prevent fires during shipment) on all lead acid and lithium batteries.
 - 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.
 - For disposal of lead acid and lithium batteries, contact the Recycling Department

- **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.