

# UAB SAFETY SHORT

## Autoclaving Biohazardous Waste at UAB

When it comes to autoclaving biohazardous waste at UAB, all biohazardous waste is not equal. Review the differences below:

**Infectious Substances, Category A**, are infectious substances capable of causing permanent disability, a life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals. Category A materials **must ALWAYS be inactivated through the autoclave process** before being disposed of as medical waste through Stericycle.

\*\*Infectious substances, including new or emerging pathogens, that do not appear in the IATA Table 3.6.D (Indicative Examples of Infectious Substances Included in Category A in Any Form Unless Otherwise Indicated (3.6.2.2.1)), but meet the same criteria, must be assigned to Category A. If it is unknown whether a substance meets the criteria, it must be included in Category A. Materials derived from animals exposed to Category A agents, including those listed as “cultures only,” must also be disposed of as Category A waste if the animal is capable of propagating that agent.

**Biological Substances, Category B** Substances are not generally capable of causing permanent disability, a life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals when exposure occurs, however, **some do require inactivation through the autoclave process** before disposing of as medical waste through Stericycle (e.g., live and attenuated vaccines, stock cultures, isolates concentrated pure cultures of human or animal pathogens). Please refer to the [Biomedical Waste Disposal Guide](#) for more information regarding autoclave requirements.



**Biological Toxins** are any toxic substance produced by microorganisms, plants or animals. Some have been determined to have the potential to pose a severe threat to both human and animal health, to plant health, or to animal and plant products and **must be inactivated through the autoclave process** before disposing of as medical waste through Stericycle. Refer to the [Biomedical Waste Disposal Guide](#) for more information regarding autoclave requirements.

**If unsure whether biohazardous waste should be autoclaved prior to disposal, please contact UAB EH&S Biosafety at 205-934-2487 or [OHS-biosafety@uab365.mail.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:biosafety@uab365.mail.onmicrosoft.com)**

## Autoclaves and Energy Conservation at UAB

UAB EH&S is working with UAB Sustainability to help labs reduce their energy consumption. Knowing what should and should not be autoclaved will help with this effort. Please consider consolidating smaller loads into a full autoclave load, as a small load consumes the same amount of energy as autoclaving a larger load.

## Autoclave Supplies

When autoclaving materials, only use bags, bins, etc. that are specifically marked for autoclave use. Biohazard Transport bags cannot be autoclaved unless they specifically indicate they are recommended for maximum temperature exposure to 140°C. If not using the appropriate supplies, materials can melt at the high temperatures and result in a mess and/or damage to the autoclave.