The Mother Lode of Silver Recycling From Film Processors

Certain areas around UAB may actually be flushing money down the drain and breaking the law in the process!

Many laboratories and departments at UAB have photographic darkrooms or use automated x-ray film developer units. These processes can produce hazardous waste in the form of spent fixer solution. The hazard comes from the silver in the used fixer solution. According to state and federal regulations, any solution containing greater than 5 parts per million (ppm) of silver must be collected and handled as hazardous waste. The used developer, though it may smell bad, is not considered (by regulations) a hazardous waste and may go down the drain.

OH&S will provide containers to collect the spent fixer solution. We also provide the service of collecting full containers, treating the spent fixer solution, and returning empty containers to the laboratory. The reclaimed silver metal is periodically sold to offset the cost of the recycling equipment. This service is free at UAB and must be done to stay in compliance with the state and federal regulations. If the fixer volume is large enough, OH&S can set up a regular pickup schedule. Small volume users can get service on a call in basis.

Conventional black and white film and print developing generates silver containing fixer. The newer digital radiographic techniques do not. OH&S personnel can help evaluate the suitability of your process and arrange for collection supplies and pick-up if needed. Primary contact personnel are Cedric Harville and Anthony Parrish at 4-3797.

Special Note

For those on the program already, please do not wait until the containers are full to call for a pickup. Call when the containers are reaching ¼ the way full. Thinking ahead will prevent any unnecessary release or spill of material. If more than one container is needed mention that when you see Anthony or call the HMF. Thank you.

If you have any questions call Anthony Parrish or Cedric Harville at 4-3797.
Pictured is an example of a commercially available silver recovery unit