Acceptance guideline 11: Laboratory wastes

Overview

The purpose of this acceptance guideline is to outline under what circumstances Icon Water will permit the discharge of liquid waste into the sewerage network.

Under section 35 of the *Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014*, it is an offence to discharge into the water or sewerage network any substance that is likely to interfere with the network, or form compounds that would be likely to interfere, unless the consent of the utility is obtained. Significant fines, imprisonment or both may result from an offence. Discharges entering an Icon Water sewer that are in breach of the conditions set out in this guideline will probably constitute a breach of section 35 of the *Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014* and may lead to prosecution of the person discharging the waste, or allowing the waste to be discharged.

This Guideline contains specific information on waste types and discharge requirements. The requirements of this Guideline are in addition to the requirements specified in *Trade waste guideline 1: General acceptance criteria for liquid waste.*

Types of premises

Description of activity

Laboratory activities are restricted to stand-alone analytical, pathology and secondary school laboratories (refer to Acceptance Guideline 18 School). They do not include laboratories that have an X-ray facility attached (such as radiology) or those that are attached to a training facility. Further, they do not include the following types of laboratories that require medium/high risk discharge applications to be submitted (see table 1):

Table 1: Laboratory requiring medium or high risk applications

Laboratories	
Agricultural research laboratory	Pharmaceutical laboratory
Animal health (parasitology) laboratory	Photographic laboratory
Autopsy laboratory	Police crime scene unit laboratory
Chemical (pesticides) laboratory	Nuclear medicine and radioisotope laboratory
Dental laboratory	Tertiary institution laboratory
Film (movies) laboratory	Veterinary research laboratory
Nuclear medicine laboratory (radiology)	X-ray laboratory

Pre-treatment requirements

A balancing pit/tank minimum capacity 600L is to be installed to treat the liquid trade waste discharge. Infectious wastes must be sterilised by autoclaving before being discharged into the sewerage system.

The pH of the liquid trade waste is to be checked. Where it is below 6.5 or above 10, pH correction will need to occur before discharge to the sewerage system.

Other issues

Chemical and solutions handling

Concentrated solutions should not be discharged to the sewerage system. Only rinse water used for the washing up of equipment may be discharged.

Concentrated acids, caustic and other corrosive chemicals should not be discharged to the sewerage system. Chemical solutions containing small quantities of these substances should be neutralised before discharging to the sewerage system.

Solvents should be collected and removed by an ACT EPA licenced contractor, and must not be disposed of into the sewerage system.

Chemical containers should be stored in such a manner that leaks or spills cannot drain to the sewerage or stormwater systems.

Housekeeping practices

Flushing with liberal quantities of water should follow the discharge of liquid trade waste from laboratory sinks. Spills and leaks should be cleaned up using dry cleaning methods.

Disposal of solid waste

Solid wastes such as hypodermic needles, syringes, instruments, utensils, swabs, dressings, bandages, paper and plastic items of a disposable nature, or human tissues must not be discharged to the sewerage system. Such wastes are to be disposed of in accordance with the ACT Department of Health Guidelines, which advise on the safe handling, storage and disposal of clinical, cytotoxic, pharmaceutical and chemical wastes.

Further information

Additional information about the discharge of liquid waste into Icon Water's sewerage network is available at **iconwater.com.au/tradewaste** or by contacting us on **02 6248 3111** or via email on **talktous@iconwater.com.au**