



Amber Glass Recycling Guidelines

1. SCOPE

This document outlines the procedure and requirements for recycling amber glass containers in participating UBC laboratories. Proper disposal of amber glass containers is necessary to reduce landfilled waste coming from UBC laboratories. Amber glass bottles that meet the requirements outlined in *section 5* and *section 7* can be recycled in select facilities on campus. If you are not sure if your building participates in the program, please email green.labs@ubc.ca.

Laboratory glass that is clear or any colour that is not amber must be decontaminated via the approved procedure and sent to the landfill for disposal. Please refer to the UBC Safety & Risk Services [Hazardous Waste Disposal Guide](#) for more information.

2. PURPOSE

- To provide guidelines for recycling amber glass that are consistent with our waste hauler's (Waste Control Services) requirements and UBC safety requirements.
- To ensure that there is a consistent standard for recycling amber glass containers used by participating labs.
- To reduce the amount of UBC amber glass waste being disposed of in landfills.

3. BACKGROUND

Glass bottles are a common type of container for the various chemicals used in research labs at UBC. Lab glass is currently not accepted in a campus-wide recycling program; however, the amber glass recycling program allows for some lab containers to be recycled into new bottles or as material for sandblasting. Clear and non-amber coloured glass present a different set of collection challenges and more significant concerns around chemical hazards. For proper disposal of non-amber glass containers, please refer to the UBC Safety & Risk Services [Hazardous Waste Disposal Guide](#).

4. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the program is shared between three main stakeholders. These include UBC Green Labs, Building Operations, and participating buildings & labs.



Participating buildings & labs:

- Educate co-workers and/or students to create awareness about the program and its guidelines;
- Monitor collection and ensure that the recycling requirements outlined in *section 7* are met; and
- Coordinate the transfer of acceptable materials to their building's central collection bin.

Green Labs:

- Provide support for program expansion;
- Develop and supply guidelines and other program materials; and
- Receive and communicate program updates to and from Waste Control Services.

Building Operations:

- Develop the contract with Waste Control Services;
- Supply the recycling bins; and
- Cover the budget & program costs.

5. ACCEPTED MATERIALS

The program **only accepts AMBER glass** containers which:

- Are between 50mL and 4L.
- Are empty, rinsed clean, and dry.
- Have labels and caps removed (Detailed procedure outlined in *section 8*).
- Previously contained non-hazardous materials.
- Previously contained organic solvents and have been triple rinsed with cold water, dried, and left in a fume hood for 24 hours.

6. NOT ACCEPTED MATERIALS

- Containers that previously contained toxic or corrosive materials, or Risk Group 1 or 2 biohazardous materials.
- Clear glass, or any colour that is not amber/brown.
- Bottles smaller than 50ml or larger than 4L.
- Labels (including partially removed or scratched out).
- Broken glass.



7. RECYCLING PROCEDURE

- 7.1. Empty amber glass containers must be rinsed clean and dried. If the bottle contained organic solvents, it must be triple rinsed, dried, and left in a fume hood for at least 24 hours.
- 7.2. Completely remove all caps and labels from the bottles. Detailed instructions for label removal can be found in *section 8*.
- 7.3. When bottles are ready for recycling, labs are responsible for bringing them to their building's central collection bin. This bin is typically black or grey, and is labelled "Amber Glass Recycling". If you do not know the location of your building's bin, please contact your building manager or operations team.
- 7.4. Amber glass recycling bins will be collected by Waste Control Services every other Thursday. If your bin frequently fills up before collection day, please contact green.labs@ubc.ca.

8. PROCEDURE FOR LABEL REMOVAL

- 8.1. All labels must be completely removed before recycling. The two suggested methods for doing so are listed below. Please contact green.labs@ubc.ca if you require further instruction or support.
 - 8.1.1. **Soak.** Fill an unused laboratory sink with warm water and submerge bottles in the water to soak overnight. Adding detergent to the soaking water can increase effectiveness. Drain the sink and use a scraper to assist with final label removal.
OR;
 - 8.1.2. **Heat.** Apply direct heat to the label by using a laboratory heat gun or blow drier. The label adhesive will loosen after several minutes and the label can be removed by peeling and/or use of a scraper. For older, harder to remove labels, a hand steamer can be used.



WRONG



WRONG



CORRECT

9. ADDITIONAL RECYCLING PROGRAMS

Additional recycling programs exist for **Styrofoam**, **Soft Plastics**, and some **Lab Plastics**. Visit UBC's [A-Z Recyclepedia](#) for more information about these and other recycling programs on campus.

10. OTHER RESOURCES

- 10.1.** Recycling starts with smart purchasing. Visit UBC's [Sustainable Purchasing Guide](#) for more information.
- 10.2.** Wonder what else goes where? For current information about more recycling options on campus, visit UBC's [A-Z Recyclepedia](#).
- 10.3.** Looking for more sustainable solutions for your lab? Visit [UBC Green Labs](#) or contact green.labs@ubc.ca for more information.