

SOP: Proper Labeling and Color-Coding of Waste Containers

This SOP details the standards for **proper labeling and color-coding of waste containers** to ensure correct segregation, handling, and disposal of different types of waste. It includes guidelines on label content, color codes for various waste categories, container placement, and maintenance to promote safety, regulatory compliance, and environmental protection.

1. Purpose

To define the procedure for labeling and color-coding waste containers to prevent cross-contamination, facilitate proper disposal, and comply with regulatory requirements.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in waste management, handling, transportation, and disposal activities within the facility.

3. Responsibilities

- **Staff:** Must adhere to labeling and color-coding procedures when handling waste.
- **Supervisors:** Ensure that containers are properly labeled and color-coded. Conduct periodic checks and training.
- **Environmental Health & Safety (EHS):** Maintain color-code standards, audit compliance, and update SOP as needed.

4. Procedure

4.1 Waste Container Labeling

- All waste containers must display a legible label indicating:
 - Type of waste (e.g., Biohazard, Chemical, Recyclable, Sharps)
 - Date of waste generation
 - Origin (department/lab/unit)
 - Hazard warnings, if applicable
- Labels must be waterproof and resistant to tearing and fading.
- Ensure labels are securely affixed and clearly visible without obstruction.

4.2 Color-Coding Standards

Waste Category	Container Color	Typical Container
Biohazardous/Waste (Infectious)	Red	Red bags or bins marked with biohazard symbol
Chemical Waste	Blue	Blue drums/cans with hazard labels
Sharps	Yellow	Yellow puncture-proof boxes
General (Non-Hazardous)	Black	Black bags/bins

Waste Category	Container Color	Typical Container
Recyclable Waste	Green	Green bags/bins
Paper Waste	White	White bins

Note: Follow local regulations for additional or alternative color codes where required.

4.3 Container Placement

- Waste containers must be placed in designated, easily accessible areas close to the point of waste generation.
- Do not overfill containers; replace or remove when they reach maximum fill line.
- Ensure containers are closed/sealed when not in use.

4.4 Maintenance and Inspection

- Inspect containers daily for damage, leaks, and compliance with labeling/color coding.
- Replace damaged or faded labels immediately.
- Clean and disinfect containers regularly to prevent contamination.

5. Training

All relevant personnel must receive training on correct labeling, color-coding practices, and the importance of waste segregation.

6. Records

- Keep records of container inspections and maintenance.
- Document staff training sessions and attendance.

7. References

- Applicable local/regional waste management regulations
- Environmental Health & Safety Guidelines