ECKERD COLLEGE

# Safe Operating Procedure

**(2/04)**

## CHEMICAL CONTAINER LABELING

All chemical containers used and stored at Eckerd must be labeled to identify their contents. Labeling is important to prevent accidental misuse and inadvertent mixing of incompatible chemicals. Proper labeling also facilitates quick decision-making and action in the event of an emergency (i.e., spillage, exposure, etc.), and avoids the expense associated with the handling, management, and disposal of unknown chemicals. This SOP is primarily focused on container labeling for chemicals that are not spent, used, or otherwise intended for collection by Facilities Maintenance. Consult the NAS SOP, **Hazardous Waste Collection Procedures**, for specific labeling guidance.

**Labeling Requirements by Type of Container**

As described below, specific labeling requirements vary with the type of container.

- **Permanent containers** mean those containers, as received from the manufacturer. Permanent containers must be labeled with the following information: chemical name[1]; physical hazards[2]; health hazards[2]; target organ; manufacturer name and address; and date of receipt. Most of this information will already be provided on the manufacturer's label. Generally, the only information that needs to be added by the user is the date of receipt.

- **Durable containers** means those containers that are not provided by the manufacturer but which hold chemicals that will be used only in one work area usually for longer than one day, and by more than one person. Examples include stock solutions and dilutions of chemical products. Durable containers must be labeled with the following information: chemical name[1] and concentration; date of preparation and preparer's initials; physical hazards[2]; and health hazards[3]; It may also be helpful to add the following information: method or procedure reference; storage location; recordkeeping information; and target organ(s).

- **Transient containers** means those containers that will be used to hold chemicals for less than one day and that will be under the control of the person filling the container. No labeling is required for these containers until they are no longer under the control of the person who prepared the material. Examples include solutions that will be used immediately in an experiment and cleaning solutions that will be used by the end of the day. Transient

containers can be inadvertently left unlabeled at the end of the day, so consideration should be given to labeling them in accordance with the requirements for durable containers, whenever possible. If a transient container is left unattended in an unsecured area, it must be labeled in accordance with the requirements for durable containers.

**Special Circumstances**

Small containers, such as vials and test tubes, can be labeled as a group by labeling the outer container (i.e., rack or box). Alternatively, a placard can be used to label the storage location for small containers (i.e., shelf, refrigerator, etc.).

Any media can be used to label containers as long as it is resistant to smearing and fading. Old labels must be completely defaced or removed when reusing containers, unless the old label accurately describes the new contents.

[1]Chemical name can mean an acronym or shorthand abbreviation *if* a cross-reference between the fully written chemical name and its associated short-hand name is posted in the work area. However, shorthand or abbreviated chemical names are never allowed on hazardous material collection containers.

[2]Physical hazards can be described by one or more of the following words, or their associated symbols: flammable, organic peroxide, pyrophoric, oxidizer, explosive and water reactive.

[3]Health hazards can be described by one or more of the following words, or their associated symbols: biohazardous, infectious, corrosive, poison, toxic, radioactive, carcinogen, irritant, and sensitizer.

[4]Work area does not necessarily mean a single room. A single work area can consist of multiple rooms that are used similar processes (e.g., suite of labs under the control of a single Principal Investigator). Distinct processes, staff, and persons responsible for the area generally define different work areas.