

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Waste

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This edition will look back at the soon to be over 2020 and what has occurred in the chemical waste world at schools. Despite the prevails of the corona virus the waste industry did not slow down too much (we are considered an essential industry) and we did many collections from your school laboratories this year. I usually don't keep count of how many schools we do collections from but there did not seem to be a noticeable drop off in school collections.

In November we did nine schools in north eastern Victoria from Yarrowonga to Mt Beauty. Two schools in Albury are still waiting for the border to reopen and apparently this is happening very soon and we will be able to do their collections in a week or so. Any Victorian school that wants a collection this year is encouraged to get this organised no later that December the 11th as we just run out of time after that. Theres nothing wrong with a January collection when things have settled down.

What have we observed in the school lab this year during our travels? The biggest thing is the electronic EPA certificates. Many of you have registered the school on the EPA portal and attempted to prepare a certificate. It is the responsibility of the school as a chemical disposer to register. Industry is in the same boat. Once you have registered, EPA will issue a username (usually your email) and a password which you can change when you first log in. When you have arranged for a collection you can login and prepare the certificate and I will give you the details of what to actually enter below.

The main problem encountered with the certificate is that you must have Microsoft Internet Explorer as the internet browser. The thing wont work on ANY OTHER BROWSER. This means a windows computer not an Apple or other type. No Safari, Chrome, Edge or Firefox. Just IE. Microsoft are ceasing support for IE very soon we hear so not sure what EPA will do. They are incorporating a new Act and associated Regulations mid 2021 (delayed by 12 months) and pretty sure the browser requirement for their electronic waste transport certificates will be inclusive of any browser and platform, and able to be done on hand held devices. (what progress!)

Assuming you are ready to prepare a waste transport certificate , the first question you will be required to answer is the waste code and category . Use category T -miscellaneous and then code 100 for chemicals from laboratories, so T100.

You should then be taken to a blank certificate with various boxes requiring an entry, The boxes ringed in pink are mandatory, the blue ones not. Most boxes have drop down lists (the arrow on the right side); your schools name and contact (you) and contacts phone number will come up as you click on each of the boxes. The selected waste code will be there, and you need to select a few things : class number - chose either class 3 flammables or class 6 toxics, The respective UN numbers are 1993 or 2810. These are the most common dangerous goods classes for school laboratory chemicals. Packing group either II or III. Classification choice is not classified (this is an EPA classification for solid wastes that wont apply to you) . The description of the wastes is a pink box with no drop down so you can type in anything here but we suggest " school laboratory chemicals" don't worry about contaminants and there is no need to do a separate certificate for every chemical of group of chemicals -the T100 code is good for multi class chemicals as commonly encountered in the laboratory.

You will be asked to choose a disposal site from a drop down list so scroll down till you find your preferred disposal company, the same for the transporter, in our case its one and the same. You will not be able to select a waste company or transporter that is not licensed to receive T100 or cannot transport these . This completes Part A of the certificate and you should push the submit button and hopefully it will go through and issue an EPA transport certificate number. We have unfortunately seen a lot of instances where a yellow box pops up asking you to add something to something before the certificate is accepted. When you do as bidden the certificate details disappear and you have to start all over again. I don't know why this happens but when it does I suggest that this is now a good chance to see if you can recall all the certificate details as you do

the whole thing again. And keep breathing deeply . Once you have part A down you can now do Part B which is the transporter detail and you will need the rego of the vehicle doing the collection. We can supply this at the time of collection or prior if you are able to do the certificate before we get there. Once part B is submitted you will be asked to View and Print which you do and print out a copy for the driver and yourself.

No worries? Of course not. If for some reason however you are unable to follow this "simple" procedure such as no internet access, not registered, computers playing up, dog ate the keyboard etc., we can do a certificate on your behalf as an accredited agent, but please do this as a last resort. Feel free to call about any aspect of the certificate process as many schools only do one disposal per year and it seems to be a lot of mucking about for one disposal. By all means give it a try though , we are not sure EPA's attitude to accredited agents for one off collections is going to be under the new Act as these are for more than one collection of the same waste over a day.

Other observations from our various adventures in school labs worth noting include : we collected only one white phosphorous this year for disposal and it is becoming increasing rare in school labs. Last year I recall two or three. We need to work on potassium next
The ventilation of your class 3 dg cabinets is still not totally incorporated and I have seen many with no ventilation at all. The exhaust should be outside and does not require a fan, You do not need to ventilate any of the other dg cabinets either and there is no requirement for distance separation of dg cabinets. These are already segregation devices. The class 8 cabinet needs physical separation of acids and alkalis if you have them in the same cabinet. Otherwise it's a separate cabinet for each, Put the elemental mercury in the alkali cabinet, also the iodine and sodium sulphide if you have any.

Don't forget if you want us to take a quick squizz at your lab when we are there, just ask. Overall the level of compliance and awareness of good lab management is rising and I haven't had one question about what can be turfed down the sink for a long time. Also we now have a radiation meter so can check you radioactive rocks and sources for soundness of storage and shielding , no charge.

We wish everyone a safe and peaceful Christmas and festive season and will see you all at Labcon and STAV next year and don't forget: THE WASTE NEVER STOPS.