

Chemical Waste Disposal

Spill Incident
UTHSC – March 2019

Incident: On March 12 personnel in the Coleman building observed a chemical odor emanating throughout the first floor of the building. Investigation uncovered an unidentified material leaking out of mechanical equipment space and accumulating on the floor. Facilities staff concluded that spill was likely caused by the inappropriate disposal of chemicals down a building drain. The properties of the material caused a pump to fail and resulted in an overflow into building space. Neither the cause of this spill nor the identify of the chemical was confirmed. A hazardous waste response team was contacted to clean the spill.

Hazard: Improper disposal of chemical waste may result in injury or illness when workers are exposed or chemicals react with incompatible materials. Building components may be damaged and require costly repairs. The environment may be adversely impacted and regulatory fines may be levied by TDEC, the EPA or municipal authorities.

Safety: Chemical waste must not be discarded into the trash or down the drain unless specifically authorized by Campus Safety or the Office of Research Safety. Hazardous waste must be properly managed in accordance with the requirements detailed in the UTHSC Chemical Hygiene Plan. All researchers annually receive training to properly manage hazardous waste as part of their Laboratory Safety Training.

Contact the Office of Research Safety at ext. 8-6114 or labsafety@uthsc.edu to have hazardous waste removed from your lab or for additional information about the proper management of hazardous materials.

