

## **AUTOCLAVE OPERATING PROCEDURES**

This November 2004 procedure applies to the sterilization of all bio-hazardous waste and replaces the procedure of June 1998. The basic methodology applies to the use of all University autoclaves.

- 1.) All materials to be autoclaved must be in acceptable containers.
  - a.) Biohazard bag
  - b.) Sharps containers
  - c.) Other approved container with biohazard symbol.
- 2.) Bags must not be tightly sealed or it will interfere with efficiency of the autoclave. Ensure that there are no sealed contents within bags (vials with stoppers, test tubes with screw caps secured).
- 3.) Bags and sharps containers should not be leaking or contaminated on the outside. If leaking or contamination is suspected, disinfect the primary container or place contents in a secure approved container prior to autoclaving.
- 4.) Place a one-foot long strip of heat sensitive autoclave tape on each container.
- 5.) Place bags in POLYPROPYLENE autoclave trays designated with PP on the bottom. Sharps may be placed to the side of the polypropylene trays. Do not double stack bags or exceed four bags per tray. **DO NOT USE POLYETHYLENE TRAYS DESIGNATED AS HDPE. THESE TRAYS WILL NOT HOLD UP UNDER CERTAIN AUTOCLAVE CONDITIONS.**
- 6.) Record the number of bags and sharps, the date and your initials on the temperature chart recorder and place the chart on the recorder hub.
- 7.) If you are running a spore test strip, required at least monthly, place it between bags at the center of the load. Record the last two digits of the autoclave on the envelope of the spore strips.
- 8.) Close the autoclave door securely but take care not to over tighten the door.
- 9.) Set the autoclave run time for 45 minutes and push the liquids button.
- 10.) Check the door gaskets for leaking steam and tighten if needed.
- 11.) At the completion of the run, wait until the temperature drops below 100° C. Do not force the door if it does not open easily.
- 12.) Remove the containers wearing the orange insulated gloves to prevent burns. Check to make sure the tape says "Autoclaved". Any containers on which the heat sensitive tape does not say "Autoclaved" must be re-processed until the tape says "Autoclaved".
- 13.) Dispose of autoclaved bags in the dumpster.
- 14.) Submit autoclaved sharps containers to the EH&S Hazardous Waste Program for disposal by Monterey Bay Medical Waste Management or other U.C. licensed vendor. **DO NOT PLACE AUTOCLAVED SHARPS IN DUMPSTER.**
- 15.) Process spore strip test according to manufacturer recommendations and maintain with autoclave documentation. Place the strip chart in the autoclave book. Attach results of spore strip, if any, to the appropriate temperature recording chart.
- 16.) If you are accidentally stuck by a contaminated sharp or liquid in the biohazard bag splashes into your eyes or on a cut or sore, wash the area immediately and report the incident to your supervisor.