

AUTOCLAVE OPERATING PROCEDURES

This procedure applies to the sterilization of all biohazardous and medical waste. The basic methodology applies to the use of all University autoclaves. **NO NOT USE ANY AUTOCLAVE WITHOUT TRAINING.**

- 1.) All materials to be autoclaved must be in acceptable containment:
 - a.) Biohazard bag
 - b.) Sharps containers
 - c.) Other approved container with biohazard symbol.
- 2.) Do not seal bags tightly and check that sealed containers are loosened (vials with stoppers, test tubes with screw caps secured) are inside the bag to be autoclaved. Tightly sealed bags and containers do not allow for complete sterilization.
- 3.) If the bags or sharps container is contaminated on the outside or leaking, disinfect the primary container or place contents in a secure approved container prior to autoclaving Place contents in a secure approved container prior to autoclaving.
- 4.) Place a strip of heat sensitive autoclave tape on each container.
- 5.) Place bags in POLYPROPYLENE autoclave trays designated as PP on the bottom. Sharps containers 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.) Complete the waste log with the date, type of waste, autoclave time (at max temp), temperature, container type, weight estimate, lab group, and comments and spore test information if applicable.
- 7.) Spore test strips, (are placed between bags at the center of the load. Record the last two digits of the autoclave in the spore strips testing log. Spore testing is required at least monthly for Regulated Medical Waste (red bag) treatment.
- 8.) Close the autoclave door securely but take care not to over tighten the door.
- 9.) Set the autoclave run time for 30 minutes and select the "Liquid" cycle.
- 10.) Check the door gaskets for leaking steam and tighten door seal if needed.
- 11.) At the end of the run, wait until the temperature drops below 100° C and pressure is zero before opening the door. Do not force the door if it does not open easily.
- 12.) Remove the containers wearing the insulated gloves to prevent burns. Confirm the indicator tape has been activated (says "Autoclaved" or has dashed dark stripes). Re-process containers if the heat sensitive tape has not activated. Replace the heat sensitive tape before autoclaving again.
- 13.) Dispose of autoclaved bags and sharps containers in the dumpster **AFTER** placing inside an opaque (black) garbage bag.
- 14.) 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 page in the log book.
- 15.) 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.