

12 MONTHS OF RESEARCH SAFETY

OCTOBER 2025

PROPER LABELING

Labeling containers is a critical part of laboratory safety. Labels communicate hazards to yourself and others, to ensure that they know how to safely work in the area. Two recent incidents on campus show the importance of proper label use.

Properly Label Chemicals

During a lab cleanout, the hazardous waste team found an unlabeled soup container of concentrated hydrofluoric acid (HF).

Because HF requires specialized handling and treatment, the lack of labeling created a serious exposure risk to lab personnel, facilities, custodial staff, and first responders, who would not have known how to respond properly to an exposure.



Properly Label Waste



A waste container labeled as an inert aqueous mixture with acetone ruptured after EH&S hazardous waste team picked up the container from the lab.

The lab later identified that nitric and acetic acids had been added, reacting with the acetone to generate heat and pressure. The incident highlights the importance of reading waste labels and adding only listed, compatible materials.

What we can do

Chemical container labels provide essential safety information required by law. Once chemicals are transferred or mixed, that information is lost unless properly relabeled. Clear labeling helps protect everyone and prevent accidents. Refer to the Chemical Hygiene Plan for details on hazard communication and labeling.

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Report an Incident, Injury or Safety Concern [Here](#)

 **Questions?**