



## Putting Trash in Its Place – Waste Disposal at Fermilab

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Trash dumpsters are located throughout the Fermilab site to collect solid waste (i.e., trash or refuse) generated at the Lab. Two perennial problems in managing the dumpster program are (1) trash from outside the Laboratory and (2) hazardous materials or other inappropriate waste appearing in dumpsters.

### PERSONAL TRASH FROM OUTSIDE THE LABORATORY

The Laboratory’s cost for disposal of trash in dumpsters is based on volume. So when personal trash is tossed in the dumpsters, the Laboratory must pay for it. Since federal funds are used by the Laboratory to pay for the disposal of trash, this use of dumpsters amounts to a misuse of Government property.

#### Expensive Trash: A Real Life Situation

Last month, the driver of a BFI refuse truck noticed a large volume of fuming white liquid in the back of his garbage truck after he emptied a Fermilab dumpster. He notified the Fermilab Hazard Control Technology Team (HCTT). An HCTT technician immediately contacted other members of the HCTT and the Fermilab Fire Department was called. It was determined that the liquid was contained within the truck; otherwise it would have been an environmental safety issue as well. The driver parked the vehicle at Site 40 so the cleanup could begin. From the compacted containers found in the truck, the liquid was determined to be a mixture of latex paint, oil base paint, penetrating oil, oil base stain, and muriatic acid (HCl). It appeared that this waste was not generated at the Lab because other household items were found in the truck’s hopper. Later, members of the HCTT discovered additional household and hazardous waste in the dumpster next on the route. That dumpster was locked out for further investigation.

A few days later, a mattress, box spring, and old clothing were found in a dumpster, along with gear lubricant, and a can of extremely flammable aerosol paint. In another dumpster on the same route, four to six one gallon cans of paint were compacted in the garbage truck.

Guess how much it cost to clean up the garbage truck in the first incident?

<i>Personal Protection Equipment (tyvek suits, organic vapor respirators, gloves):</i>	<i>\$75</i>
<i>Materials to absorb and contain the waste:</i>	<i>\$100</i>
<i>Hazardous Waste Disposal:</i>	<i>\$200</i>
<i>Labor cost for 3 members of the HCTT (2 hours each):</i>	<i>\$300</i>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>\$675</i></b>

Not only did someone dump their personal trash in a Fermilab dumpster, some of it was hazardous. The Lab spent almost \$700 because someone did not want to contact their local authorities for guidance on disposal of their hazardous household waste (most communities have special collection days for such materials). Fortunately, no one was injured and the waste did not touch the ground. Imagine the costs if someone had been injured; medical bills, lost work time, not to mention the injured person's suffering. If these chemicals had leaked onto the soil, the cost of soil remediation would have added to the volume of hazardous waste and associated costs.



**Hazardous waste found in the Cross Gallery Dumpster.**

Although Fermilab Security keeps an eye out for suspicious activity in the vicinity of the dumpsters, we would appreciate your assistance in promptly reporting this kind of abuse. It may be true that much of the problem is attributable to individuals from off site. However, employees who use Laboratory dumpsters for the disposal of trash from home or other non-work activities may be required to reimburse the Laboratory for the cost of the disposal of their trash and will be subject to whatever disciplinary action Laboratory management deems appropriate.

Never put hazardous, radioactive, or special non-hazardous waste materials into trash receptacles or dumpsters. Check with your Senior Safety Officer or ES&H Department before disposing of any waste. Ignoring these prohibitions may constitute a violation of State and Federal regulations that can result in serious environmental damage, expensive remediation, and possible penalties for the Laboratory.

Additional information on the management of waste may be found in Chapters 8020 to 8025 of the ES&H Manual.



**Members of the HCTT cleaning up the garbage truck**

*Please do your part to see this type of incident is not repeated. Report any suspected unauthorized use of the dumpsters to your Senior Safety Officer.*