



Hazardous Waste Management Program

[Back to EHSO Home](#)

Ethidium Bromide Disposal

Ethidium Bromide is a powerful mutagen. These special disposal procedures are recommended.

Waste Stream	Description	Waste disposal procedure
Buffer solutions	Typically contain very small concentrations of ethidium bromide. Normally <0.5mg/L	Drain disposal is acceptable for these solutions but it is STRONGLY recommended that they first be run through an appropriate filter*. The spent filters should be treated as heavily contaminated debris (see below) and disposed of through the hazardous waste program.
Stock Solutions	Typically contain higher concentrations of ethidium bromide. Normally ~10mg/ml	Drain disposal of these solutions is not advisable unless they are filtered*. Alternately stock solutions may be collected in a suitable container with a screw type lid and disposed of through the hazardous waste program.

<p>Gels</p>	<p>Typically contain 3-5mg/ L of ethidium bromide.</p>	<p>Gels should be collected in a 20 liter pail double lined with black garbage bags. Bags should be clearly indentified: "Ethidium Bromide Gels for hazardous waste disposal only".</p> <p><i>PLEASE DO NOT USE ORANGE BIOHAZARD BAGS**</i></p> <p>Keep separate from contaminated debris</p> <p>Dispose of ethidium bromide gels through the hazardous waste program.</p>
<p>Heavily contaminated debris</p>	<p>Including material which is heavily contaminated with ethidium bromide (e.g. waste from spills, filters, etc.)</p>	<p>Collect in a 20 liter pail double lined with black garbage bags. Bags should be clearly indentified: "Ethidium Bromide Debris for hazardous waste disposal only".</p> <p><i>PLEASE DO NOT USE BIOHAZARD BAGS**</i></p> <p>Keep separate from gels.</p> <p>Dispose of ethidium bromide gels through the hazardous waste program.</p>

<p>Lightly contaminated debris</p>	<p>Including material which has had casual contact with ethidium bromide (e.g. gloves)</p>	<p>Double bag and package into a secure box.</p> <p><i>PLEASE DO NOT USE BIOHAZARD BAGS**</i></p> <p>The box may then be disposed of in the normal trash.</p>
<p>Crystals and Powders</p>	<p>Typically concentrated or pure ethidium bromide.</p>	<p>Collect in appropriate waste containers.</p> <p>Dispose of crystals and powders through the hazardous waste program.</p>

- * Ethidium Bromide filters are manufactured by [Schleicher & Schuell](#) and are available from VWR Canlab as catalog number: 28165-502.
- ** Ethidium Bromide is not a considered a biohardous waste. Final disposal facilities will not accept any waste in Biohazard bags. Please use a pail double lined with black garbage bags or clear bags. Clearly identify the bags so they are not confused with regular trash.

Please Note:

Studies have shown that treatment with hypochlorite solutions does little to diminish the mutagenic properties of ethidium bromide.

There is now an alternative to Etidium Bromide. It is marketed under the name CYBR safe DNA gel stain by Molecular Probes.

Click [here](#) to find out more (*external link*)