

# FORMALIN DISPOSAL



Formalin is the most common formaldehyde product used in laboratories and schools. Formalin presents health and safety concerns when handled incorrectly. Improper disposal of formalin is illegal.

Care must be taken when disposing or neutralizing spent formalin to ensure that human health and the environment are protected. Refer to the product's Safety Data Sheet for proper handling techniques and Personal Protective Equipment.

## PROPER DISPOSAL OF FORMALIN

- Use a licensed waste disposal company for disposal of used and unused formalin (preferred method).
  - Unused/expired formalin is classified as hazardous waste when discarded and **must** be disposed of by a licensed waste disposal company.
  - Formalin solutions having concentrations greater than 4% formaldehyde **must** be disposed of by a licensed waste disposal company. Diluting solutions of formalin greater than 4% with water, then neutralizing, is prohibited.
  - Any facility that generates more than 5 gallons of formalin waste per month **must** use a licensed waste disposal company regardless of the percentage of formaldehyde.
- Treatment on-site (used formalin only)
  - 10% Neutral Buffered Formalin solutions containing 4% or less formaldehyde can be neutralized with commercially available products. Some products leave the neutralized formalin in a liquid state that can be disposed of down the drain to the sanitary sewer, others turn formalin into a solid that can be thrown in the trash.
  - Neutralized formalin must be tested to ensure the pH is between 6 and 9 standard units and <10 mg/L formaldehyde before being poured down the drain. Test strips for pH and aldehydes are commercially available.
  - No more than 5 gallons of neutralized formalin can be disposed of in a month and no more than 1 gallon in a single day. Drains should be flushed with water after the discharge.

Federal, State, and Local laws all require documentation of onsite hazardous waste treatment via the use of a Chemical Waste Treatment Log. This log is a record of chemical waste treatment and it must be kept onsite for a minimum of three (3) years and should contain the following information:

- Date of discharge
- Chemical being neutralized
- Product used for neutralization
- Volume of neutralized formalin disposed
- pH at the time of discharge in Standard Units
- Level of formaldehyde in mg/L at time of discharge

**This document applies to the City of Phoenix sanitary sewer only and is not intended to be used with septic systems. Other jurisdictions may have different requirements.**

### Best Practice:

Use formalin substitutes as a Best Management Practice when possible.

