UF Environmental Health and Safety
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Laser Disposals and Transfers

INTRODUCTION

When disposing of an unneeded or broken laser, care must be taken. Some lasers contain hazardous materials or could be re-activated by an unsuspecting person and could thus be dangerous. Therefore UF requires that all laser transfers and disposals be approved by EH&S.

PROCEDURES

Class 3B or 4 lasers should never be disposed in regular trash, sold at an online auction or otherwise abandoned. This includes re-classified lasers such as certain laser microscopes. Always contact EH&S if you are unsure. To schedule a visit or ask a question, call UF EH&S Radiation Safety at (352) 392-7359 or email lso@ehs.ufl.edu

Operative Lasers

Lasers that are still operational should be given to UF Surplus or another UF lab.

To transfer a laser to surplus, follow the steps here. Then, contact Radiation Safety to schedule a visit. After the laser has been seen, EH&S will authorize the transfer. Dye lasers will need to be flushed, and the rinsate collected and disposed as hazardous waste. Gas lasers will need to be vented safely.

To transfer a laser to another lab at UF, fill out a new laser registration form for the receiving lab with the word "Transfer" in the comments and submit it via email to lso@ehs.ufl.edu.

Inoperative Lasers

Lasers may contain hazardous components, eg beryllium ceramics, lead circuit boards or trapped dyes/gas. Therefore it is important to dispose of the laser safely. The steps to dispose of a laser are:

1) Follow the manufacturer recommendations

    a. See if the laser user manual offers suggestions for disposal of the laser. Look for descriptions/warnings of hazardous elements within the laser.

    b. Contact the manufacturer and see if there is a recycle program for the laser. If not, ask about disposal recommendations and hazards.

2) Contact UF EH&S Radiation Safety at (352) 392-7359 or email lso@ehs.ufl.edu and schedule a decommissioning visit

3) Either return the laser to the manufacturer or transfer it to surplus. Make sure to pass on information about potential hazardous material.

The Lawrence Berkley National Lab guide to laser disposal contains many examples of hazardous components found in lasers.