



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
AND SAFETY

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL FACT SHEET

Sodium Azide Hazards and Disposal

Sodium azide is used at UNMC/Nebraska Medicine predominantly in the preservation of samples and stock solutions. It is often a better choice for this purpose than thimerosal, as sodium azide does not contain mercury. However, sodium azide does have hazards. Sodium azide can react with metals to create explosive heavy-metal azides and even dilute solutions can be explosive if heated to near its decomposition temperature. Sodium azide is also acutely toxic.

Any unwanted product and all **empty containers** of sodium azide should be tagged for disposal by Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). Also, solutions with greater than 0.02% sodium azide should be collected and tagged for disposal by EHS. Requests for pick-ups can be submitted on-line at: [Chemical Waste Pick-up Request](#)

Solutions containing less than 0.02% sodium azide as a preservative, and with no other regulated chemicals, can be flushed to the sanitary sewer with copious amounts of water.

Note: any metal items used to handle sodium azide, (i.e., spatulas, containers) can also result in the formation of heavy metal azides and must be cleaned thoroughly.

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Please call 402.559.6356 or
email unmcehs@unmc.edu with any questions