

USING FORMALIN SPECIMEN CONTAINERS AT DUKE

ABOUT SPECIMEN CONTAINERS

- In clinics, formalin use is normally limited to placing lab specimens into small containers containing formalin as a preservative.
- The preference is to purchase or obtain these capped containers pre-filled with 10% formalin. Note: Even these small containers must be labeled with appropriate hazard information.
- Formaldehyde is a sensitizer, irritant, and suspected human carcinogen.
- To avoid formaldehyde exposure via inhalation or skin contact, wear appropriate personal protective equipment when handling specimen containers (e.g., gloves) and limit container opening to the time required to insert the specimen.



FORMALDEHYDE TRAINING

- Available online at www.safety.duke.edu
- Required annually for employees who transfer formalin from one container to another

IS AN EYEWASH REQUIRED?

- The OSHA Formaldehyde standard requires eyewashes and emergency showers when there is a likelihood that formalin may be splashed on exposed eyes or skin.
- We do not consider the use of small pre-filled containers for specimen collection to present a significant splash risk and, therefore, do not require the installation of showers and eyewashes.
- If formalin use at your clinic involves handling beyond small specimen bottles (e.g., preparing formalin from concentrated solutions, filling specimen containers from bulk containers, etc.), call our office for a consultation to determine proper controls.

OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE
AND SAFETY DIVISION

Box 3387 DUMC
Durham, NC 27710
Phone: 919-684-5996
Fax: 919-681-5916

**REMEMBER TO LABEL ALL CONTAINERS OF
FORMALDEHYDE!**