

# INCIDENT-CHEMICAL EXPOSURE CROFT HALL, OCT 2014

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During a lab move, a chemical container was moved to the wrong lab, where it remained for years. While the container read “Ethyl Alcohol” on the side, it actually contained chemical waste. Several years later, a student filled spray bottles with the contents of the container, and the lab used them for about a week to sanitize biological safety cabinets, equipment, hands, etc. Several researchers were exposed to the contents. Fortunately, analysis showed that the contents were water and a common solvent, and exposures were minimal.

## LESSONS LEARNED

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- **Always label chemical waste containers properly with the contents.** Take the Hazardous Waste Management training class on MyLearning for full details.
- When reusing or disposing of empty chemical containers, the label must be removed or all names & hazard indicators (words, symbols) must be completely obliterated.
- Be aware of your lab’s and JHU’s procedures for emergencies and incident reporting. (See the Safety Note on “Reporting incidents and close calls.”)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Could we have chemical containers in our labs whose contents are uncertain?
2. Do all of our chemical waste containers list the **full** contents, not just “organic waste?”
3. Does everyone know how to properly dispose of or reuse empty containers? (See the Safety Note on “What do I do with my empties?”)