



SAN FRANCISCO
STATE UNIVERSITY

Freezer, Fridges & Food

A tutorial for interpreting this category
on the lab safety checklist

RSS INSPECT: Freezer Fridges & Food Checklist

FREEZER, FRIDGES & FOOD * ▾

1. Flammable material is not stored in a refrigerator or freezer unless it has been designed by the manufacturer for this purpose and displays a sign that reads "Flammable Storage".	×	✓	N/A
2. Lab refrigerators and freezers display a sign that reads "Not for flammable material storage", or equivalent language, IF not designed to store flammable materials.	×	✓	N/A
3. Refrigerators and freezers display a sign that reads, "Laboratory Use Only - No Food Allowed" or equivalent language.	×	✓	N/A
4. Lab microwave ovens display a sign that reads, "Not for Food Use".	×	✓	N/A
5. No food, food storage containers, or beverages are present inside lab refrigerators, freezers, microwaves, etc.	×	✓	N/A
6. No food, beverages, or condiments are visible and no room occupants were observed eating in the lab.	×	✓	N/A
7. Refrigerators have no obvious signs of contamination.	×	✓	N/A
8. Freezer does not have excessive ice buildup. Freezer contents are free of frost.	×	✓	N/A
9. Food and beverage containers are not used to store hazardous materials and/or hazardous wastes.	×	✓	N/A
10. Ice making machines display a sign that reads, "Not for Human Consumption".	×	✓	N/A
11. FREEZER, FRIDGES & FOOD - OTHER	×	✓	N/A

Statement 1

Flammable material is not stored in a refrigerator or freezer unless it has been designed by the manufacturer for this purpose and displays a sign that reads “Flammable Material Storage”.

- If the appliance is designed to store flammable materials, a sign must be displayed on the fridge by the manufacturer that clearly indicates that it is intended for that purpose.
- This sign helps prevent accidents or fires that may occur in a refrigerator not designed for storing flammable solvents.
- Check refrigerators and freezers for flammables storage
 - Items preserved in ethanol, methanol, formalin, lab samples
 - Chemicals and reagents with the “flammables” symbol or pictogram



Statement 1 Notes

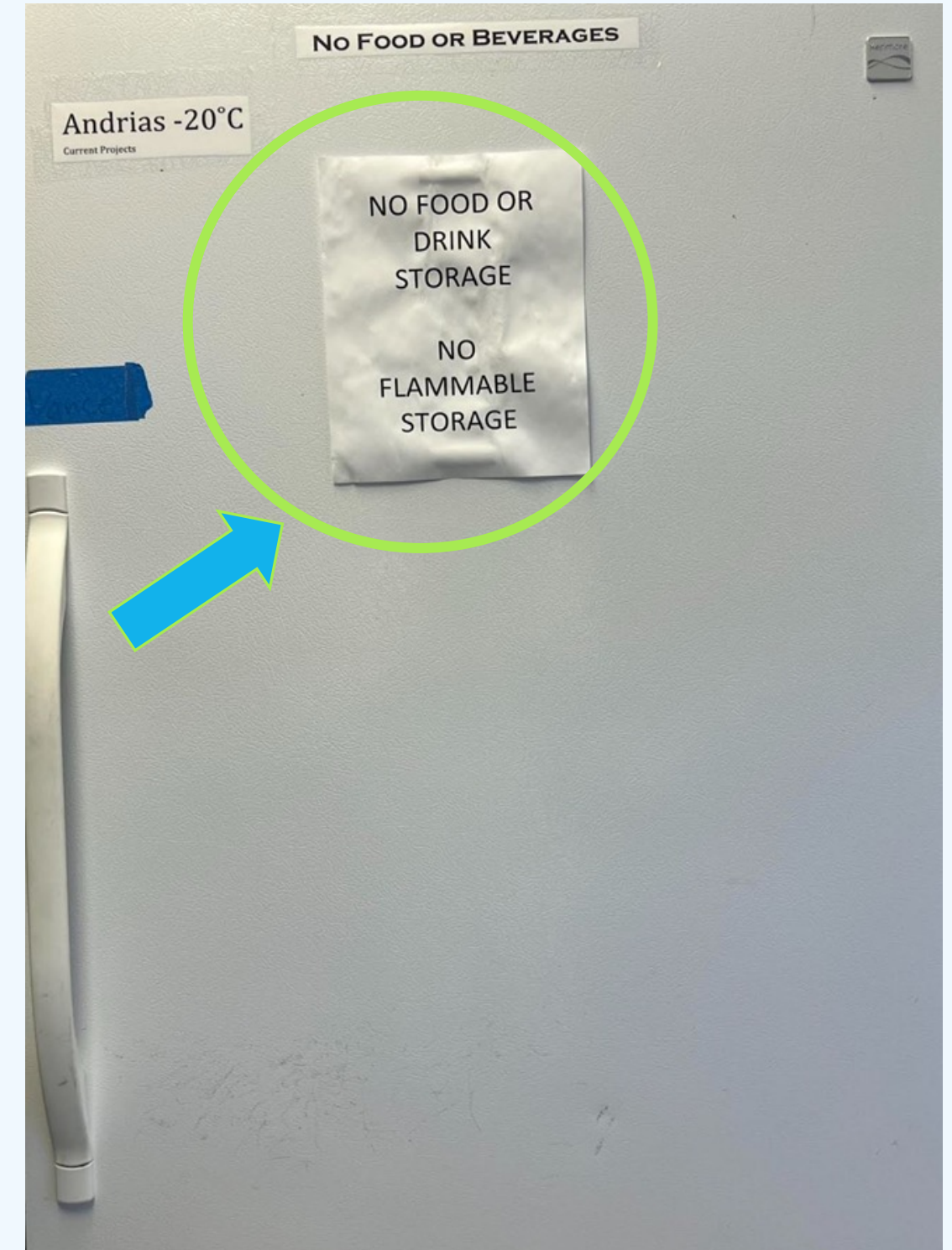
- ❖ This freezer has been designed to store flammables.
- ❖ Flammable materials may be stored inside this unit
- ❖ If you find flammables inside a unit marked as being for flammables, like this one, mark this as “compliant”



Statement 2

Lab refrigerators and freezers display a sign that reads “Not for flammable material storage” or equivalent language – if not designed to store flammable materials.

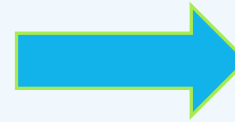
- ❖ If the fridge or freezer is not designed to store flammable materials – standard refrigerators and freezers -- post a sign indicating that it is not suitable for that purpose
- ❖ Standard lab and home refrigerators are typically **not** designed for flammable materials storage
- ❖ Posting this information reminds users that flammable storage is not allowed in these units, relocate flammable materials to another refrigerator if needed
- ❖ EH&S has suitable labels available in the Thornton Hall 217 office



Statement 2 – Notes

Replace handwritten, faded, or paper postings with a more professional-looking label that includes all required information for standard fridges and freezers

- ❖ Due to the cost, most standard lab and consumer freezers and refrigerators are not designed to store flammable materials
- ❖ EH&S has suitable labels available in the Thornton Hall 217 office
- ❖ The yellow label at right has both the “not for flammables storage” and the “no food allowed” information



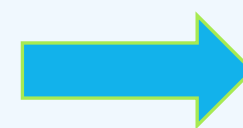
Note:

If the refrigerator is designed by the manufacturer for flammables storage, then place only a “No food, drinks, or ice for human consumption” label on it. Not this one. This unit IS for flammable material storage in this case.

Statement 2 – Notes about standard refrigerators and freezers

If the lab refrigerator or freezer already has the manufacturer's label "Not for flammables storage", then place only a

"No food or drinks for human consumption allowed" label or equivalent.



continued



Statement 2 – Notes about UL listed and approved for flammable materials storage units

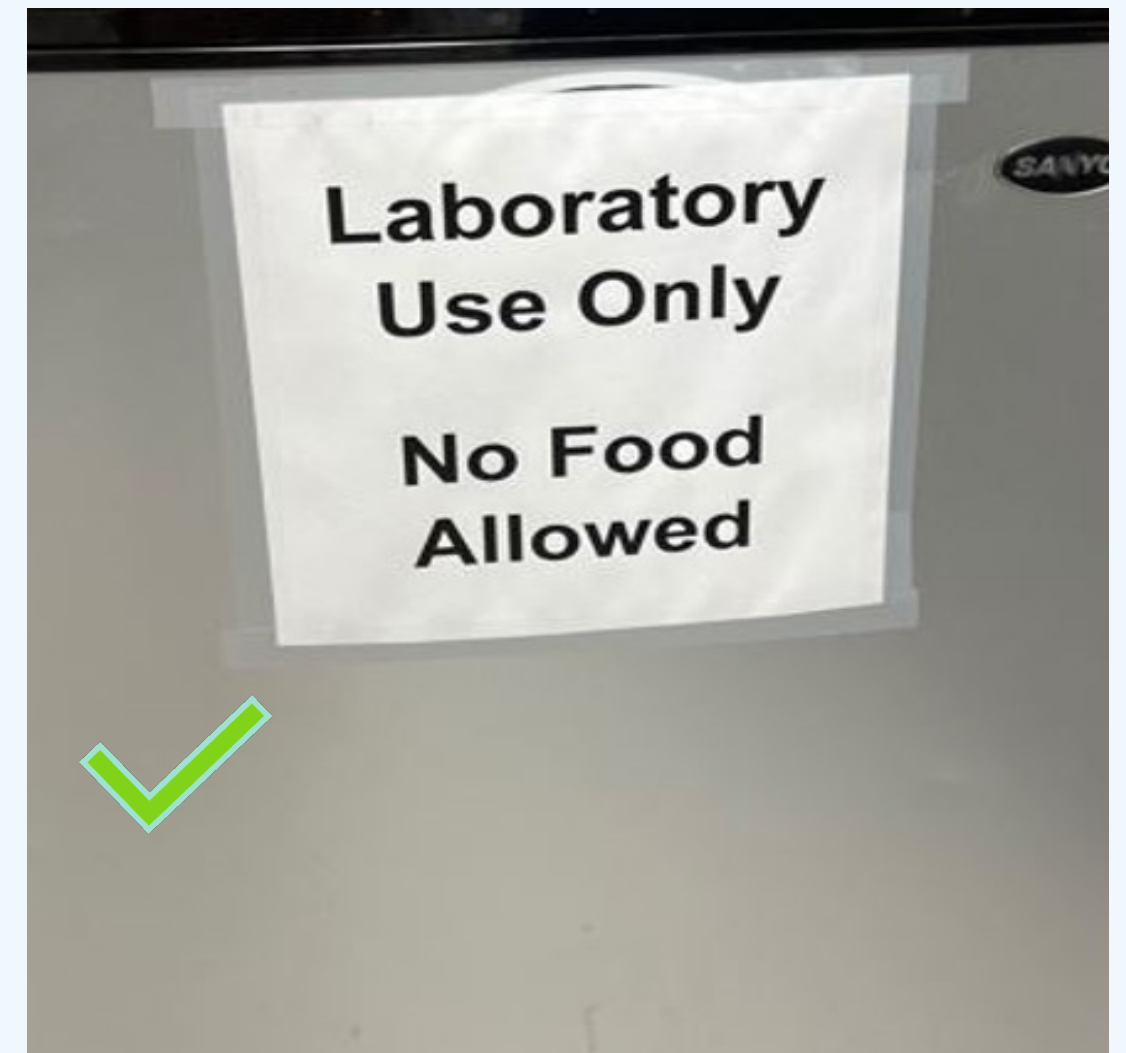
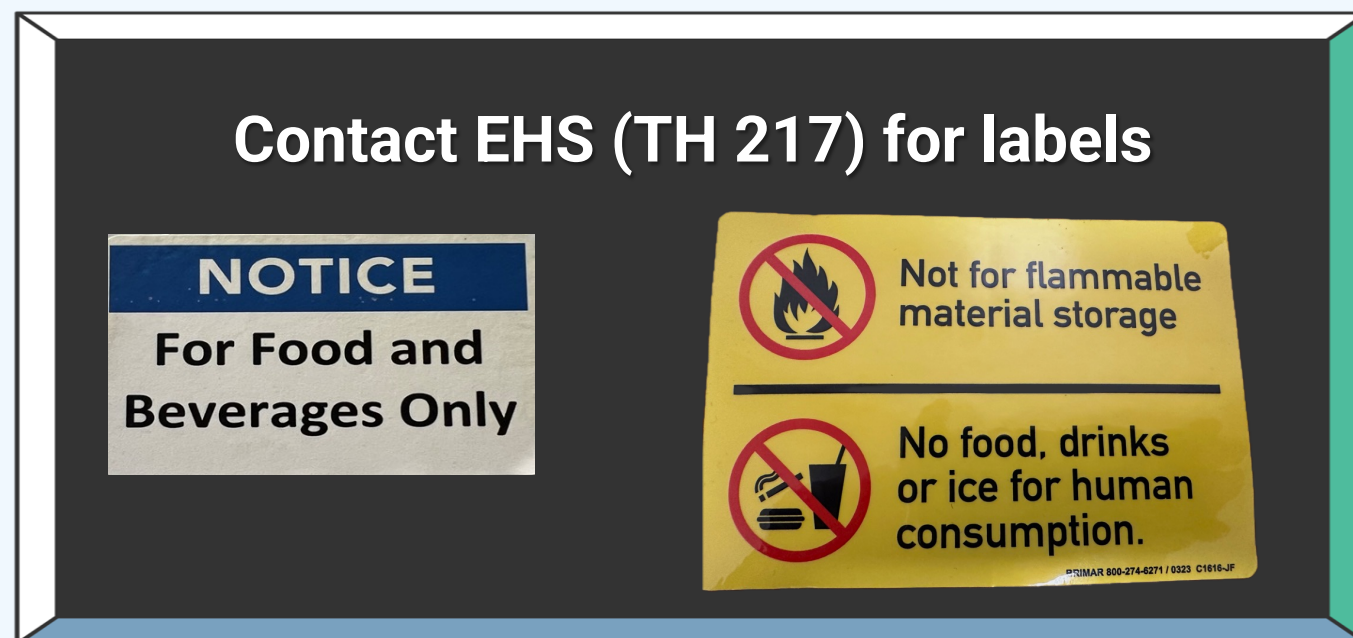
If the lab refrigerator or freezer already has the manufacturer's label "For flammable materials storage", then place only a **"No food or drinks for human consumption allowed"** label or equivalent.



Statement #3

Refrigerators and freezers display a sign that reads, “Laboratory Use Only- No Food Allowed” or equivalent language.

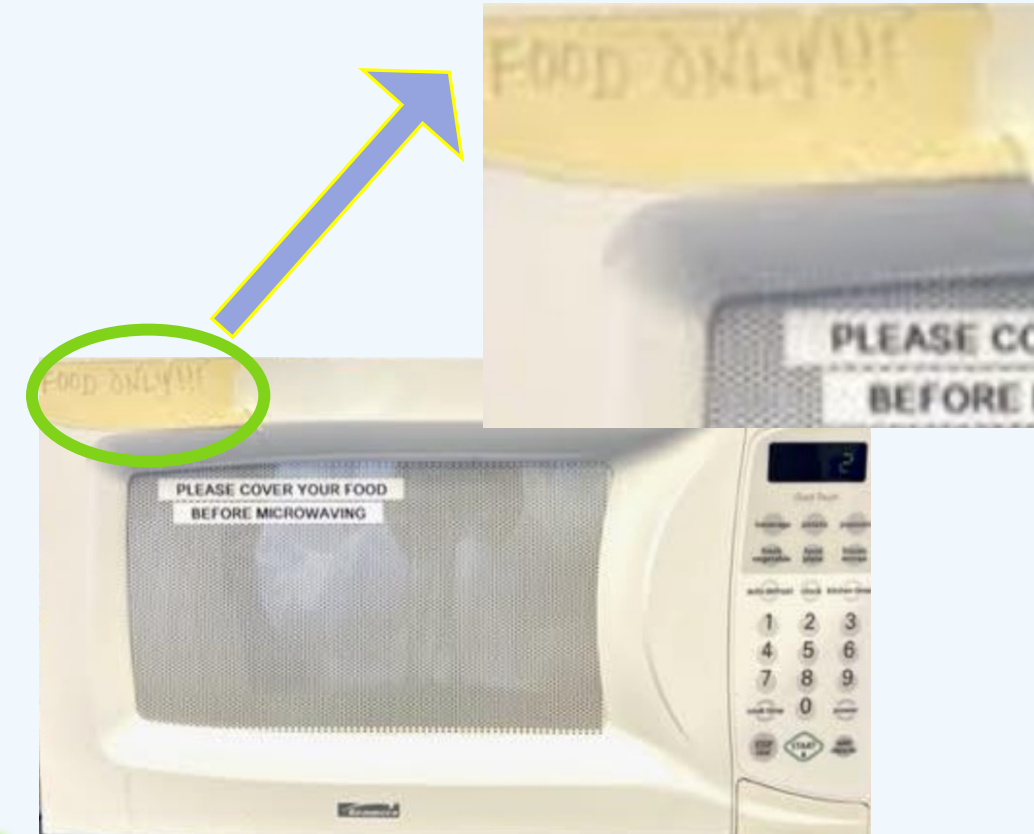
- ❖ Most refrigerators are for storing laboratory samples and materials, not intended for food or beverage
- ❖ Indicate if fridge or freezer is used for food or beverage by displaying appropriate sticker label
- ❖ All fridges and freezers present in a lab must have such a label or posting clear and visible on the door.
- ❖ EH&S staff should replace these taped paper signs with labels available from the TH 217 EH&S office



This is compliant for the “No Food” part (Statement 3). EH&S inspection staff should replace this with a more formal label. Note that this also needs the “Not for Flammables storage” message required in Statement 2.

Statement #4

Lab microwave ovens display a sign that reads, “Not for Food Use”.



EH&S should replace the faded ‘No Food’ label with a new one.

Display sign or label indicating that it is not to be used for human food and beverages

- ❖ Clearly label a microwave as being for lab use to prevent people from mistakenly using it to heat their food
- ❖ Lab microwaves are often used to heat dry samples, sterilize equipment, and perform chemical reactions, that can contaminate food if heated in same microwave
- ❖ All microwaves present in lab must display a label for this purpose

Statement #5

No food, food storage containers, or beverages are present inside lab refrigerators, freezers, microwaves, etc.

- ❖ Food and beverages are not allowed in locations where hazardous materials are handled or stored
- ❖ Remove all food and beverages intended for human consumption from lab equipment
- ❖ Sealed food and beverage containers stored inside desk drawers or cabinets (without hazardous materials in them), may be considered “compliant” depending on the space. If unsure, contact EH&S.
- ❖ Presence of spices and condiments on a lab microwave indicates that food is consumed there
 - Since it is sitting on top, it is not violating this statement, so technically this is “compliant”.



Statement #6

No food, beverages, or condiments are visible and no room occupants were observed eating in the lab.



- ❖ Food and beverages should not be stored or consumed in an area where they may be contaminated by any toxic material
- ❖ Request that occupants remove all food, condiments, and beverages from bench tops, tables, desks, and equipment
- ❖ Record as “non-compliant” if edibles and drinks are visible or containers are open

This is “non-compliant”.
Take a photo and write a note detailing the observed issue(s)



Statement #7

Refrigerators have no obvious signs of contamination.

- ❖ Signs of mold, spills, and chemical reactions should be reported as non-compliant.
- ❖ Remember to take a photo and briefly describe the issue in the finding notes section



Statement #8

Freezer does not have excessive ice buildup. Freezer contents are free of frost.



- ❖ Chemicals should not be stored in a freezer that has excessive ice buildup as it can affect their properties
- ❖ In some cases, labels can be obscured or damaged and unreadable
- ❖ It may be difficult to remove items covered in ice
- ❖ Mark obvious ice build-up as “non-compliant”
- ❖ Minor ice build up can be marked as “compliant”, but write a note and and take a photo informing the lab that they need to de-ice it

Recomendations

- ❖ Maintain regular cleaning and defrosting for proper operation
- ❖ Having an empty spare freezer on a dolly available to store chemicals while a freezer is defrosting ensures that chemicals are stored at the appropriate temperature and prevents potential loss of product during defrosting process

Statement #9

Food and beverage containers are not used to store hazardous materials and/or hazardous wastes.

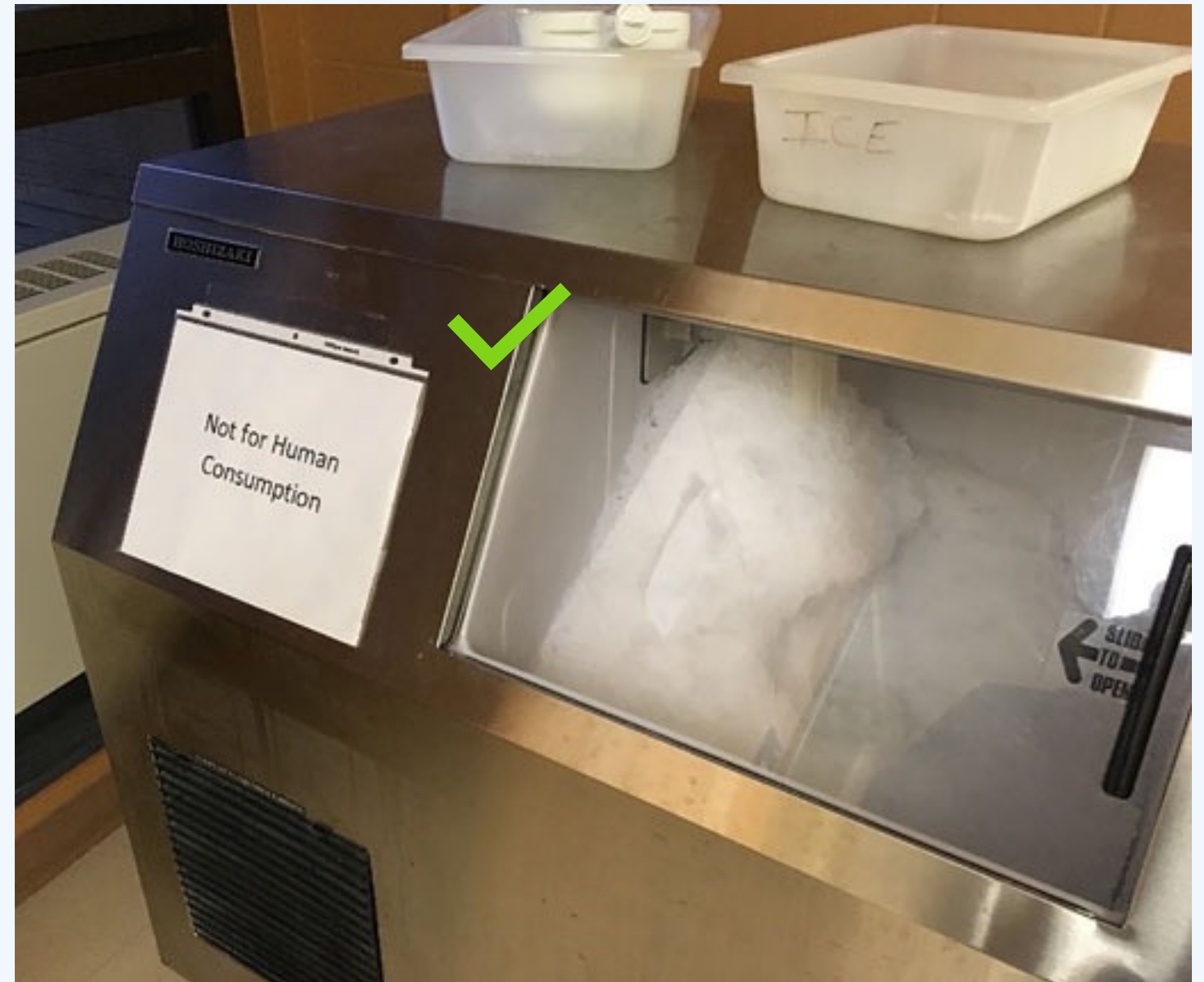
- ❖ Use appropriate containers that are specifically designed and labeled for storing hazardous materials and/or hazardous wastes
- ❖ Plastic beverage containers can disintegrate with certain solvents, bases, and acids
- ❖ There is a risk of accidentally drinking from a beverage container with a chemical not safe for human consumption
- ❖ Most of the time the use of human food or beverage containers to store lab materials will be “non-compliant”.
- ❖ There are some cases where it is acceptable, such as a cut up water bottle to store unused pipette tips. If you are unsure, mark the issue as “non-compliant” and check the “needs verification” box in the inspection finding details screen



Statement #10

Ice making machines display a sign that reads, "Not for Human Consumption".

- ❖ In the lab ice making machines are used for research or experimental purposes that require specific water quality or other conditions
- ❖ Display a sign that indicates "Not suitable for human consumption" on ice making machine
- ❖ All ice making machines must have a label/sign



Statement #11

FREEZER, FRIDGES & FOOD - OTHER

- ❖ Include other findings or safety issues related to the category, but that was not addressed in the other statements under the “Other” statement