



# HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE



Household hazardous waste is defined as common everyday products that people use in and around their homes including paint, paint thinner, herbicides, and pesticides that, due to their chemical nature, can be hazardous if not properly disposed.

As a rule, persons who generate household hazardous wastes should not pour them down the sink or put them in the regular trash unless they are certain that the wastes are non-hazardous to humans or the environment. In general, only non-hazardous solids should be disposed of in the regular trash.

The best way to deal with household hazardous wastes is not to have any! Before you buy a product make sure it will do the job you intend it to do. When possible, buy only the amount you need so there are no "leftovers" to store or to dispose of.

Read the label before you purchase a product. Many times two products will do the same job, but one requires special disposal and the other does not. For example, latex paint versus solvent-based paint. Latex paint is water-based and is not classified as hazardous, while solvent-based paints are considered a hazardous material. In addition, other hazardous materials, such as turpentine or mineral spirits, are required for clean up when using a solvent-based paint. Soap and water are all that are needed to clean up after using latex paint. The clear choice from an environmental perspective is latex paint. When possible, avoid purchasing products with **POISON, DANGER, WARNING, FLAMMABLE, TOXIC, CORROSIVE** or **CAUTION** on the label.

If you do need to purchase potentially hazardous products read and follow the label directions. If you have to store these items always leave them in their original container and never remove the label.

And, most importantly, keep all hazardous products stored in a location away from children, and out of their reach!

Generally, household hazardous waste materials belong to one of the following hazardous waste categories:

**CORROSIVE** - Examples are drain cleaners, rust removers and oven cleaners. Corrosives have an extremely low or high pH and can burn skin and mucous membranes. Labels usually state, "CORROSIVE--AVOID CONTACT WITH SKIN OR EYES."

**FLAMMABLES** - Examples include gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, butane, oil-based paints and paint thinners. Labels usually say, "EXTREMELY FLAMMABLE--KEEP AWAY FROM ANY SOURCE OF IGNITION" and "HIGHLY FLAMMABLE--KEEP AWAY FROM FLAMES."

**TOXIC MATERIALS** - Examples are benzene, cyanide compounds (found in rat fumigants), thallium sulfate (ant traps) and carbon tetrachloride (old fire extinguishers). Materials may be carcinogenic. Labels often contain the skull and crossbones and usually state, "DANGER/POISON" or "WARNING- KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN."

**OXIDIZER** - Examples include sodium hypochlorite and various peroxides. These chemicals react strongly with other compounds and may cause fires or explosions. Examples include chlorinated pool chemicals, sodium hypochlorite and various peroxides. Labels usually say, "WARNING--STRONG OXIDIZER."

**INHALATION HAZARD** - Examples include windshield wiper solution and asbestos from brake shoes and clutches in older model cars and homes. Breathing these fumes or dust can cause central nervous system disruption or lung problems.

**AIR QUALITY HAZARDS** - Could cause excessive emissions or toxic ash problems at resource recovery facilities or incinerators. Examples include thermostats, paints that contain more than one percent by weight of heavy metals, products that contain significant amounts of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and batteries--nickel, cadmium, lithium and lead acid.

**WILDLIFE HAZARDS** - Examples include old chlorinated pesticides such as DDT, chlordane, dieldrin, heptachlor, etc. Labels usually indicate the material presents a hazard to fish or wildlife. The material may be immediately toxic or accumulate in various tissues of the fish or animals. Of particular concern are those materials that are slow to degrade and tend to bio-accumulate.

**UNKNOWN** - Unidentified materials--such as those that contain no label or ingredient information--should be treated as though they belong to one of the above categories until proven otherwise

**Remember to clean up all spills when they happen! If building materials or other wastes get into a gutter, storm drain, or creek call Stormwater Hotline immediately at (580) 581-3565.**