

Proper Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes



Many products found in homes contain chemicals potentially harmful to both people and the environment. Chemical products such as oven cleaners, paint removers, bug killers, solvents, and drain cleaners are just a few common hazardous products in the home. Over the last 20 years, concern about the disposal of such products has been growing. In 1976, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) was passed, regulating the procedures governing the generation, storage, transport, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials. Although this legislation has mitigated some of the problems associated with commercial hazardous material disposal, more needs to be done to reduce and properly dispose of home hazardous wastes.

Hazardous products include the following:

- Cleaning products: oven cleaner, floor wax, furniture polish, drain cleaner, and spot remover
- Car care and maintenance: motor oil, battery acid, gasoline, car wax, engine cleaner, antifreeze, degreaser, radiator flush, and rust preventative
- Home improvement products: paints, preservatives, strippers, brush cleaners, and solvents
- Other products labeled toxic, flammable, or corrosive, or containing lye, phenols, petroleum distillates, or trichlorobenzene

Tips to Reduce Hazardous Waste Pollution:

- Recycle your used motor oil. Never pour used motor oil or other hazardous materials into a storm drain. Take household hazardous wastes to household waste drop-off days. Contact Safety/ Clean System for more information on recycling and disposal at 407-321-6080.
- Use water-based paints such as latex and wash paintbrushes in the sink with water. When using paint thinner, reuse and recycle it. Never pour unused paint or paint thinner into a storm drain.
- Use non-toxic alternatives to conventional household cleaners whenever possible.

Examples of commonly used products and safer alternatives (adapted from Washington State Department of Ecology):

- *Aerosols.* Use pump-type or non-aerosol products.
- *Art supplies.* Purchase water-based paints or inks. They should not contain lead or other toxic materials.
- *Batteries.* Rechargeable batteries are a cost-effective alternative to disposable batteries.
- *Chemical fertilizers.* Composting yard clippings and food scraps is an option. Manure (in measured amounts) is another alternative to chemical fertilizers.

- *Gasoline.* Not driving at all is the best way to reduce gasoline use. Purchasing a super-efficient hybrid or electric vehicle is the next best alternative. Carpooling, walking, bicycling, and public transportation are other viable options.
- *Motor Oil.* Use re-refined motor oil. Doing so will spur the market for recycled motor oil and decrease reliance on new oil supplies.
- *Pesticides.* Keeping homes and gardens tidy reduces the food supply for insect pests, averting the need for pesticides. Onion, garlic, and marigold plants help keep garden pests at bay.

For example, it is possible to clean ovens by applying table salt to spills, then scrubbing with soda water. Also, approximately a cup of baking soda combined with a cup of white vinegar and a cup of ammonia in a gallon of warm water makes an excellent multipurpose cleaner.

When use of hazardous household products is unavoidable, they should not be flushed down the drain because these drains lead to either a home septic system or a municipal treatment plant, neither of which has adequate capability to remove hazardous chemicals from wastewater. Toxic chemicals might also disrupt microbial processes in septic tanks and treatment plants, reducing their effectiveness. Some of the toxins can be removed, but a significant portion of these chemicals passes through treatment processes and ultimately contaminates water resources. Some hazardous products should never be poured on the ground, into gutters, or down storm drains where they will eventually enter storm sewers and be transported untreated into nearby waterbodies.

Benefits

Properly disposing of household hazardous wastes ensures that contamination through leaks and spills does not occur. If toxic wastes are disposed of with regular garbage, they could destroy landfill liners and compromise other disposal areas.

Hazardous Waste Disposal for Orange County Residents – [click here](#).



Sources & Additional Information:

http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=6