

What Is Household Hazardous Waste?



Why Is It A Problem?

Many products found in your home can pose a health or environmental hazard if you don't dispose of them properly. Anything labeled as toxic, flammable, corrosive, reactive, caustic, or explosive can threaten family health and safety, pets and wildlife. It may also pose risks to indoor and outdoor air quality.

According to national estimates, each home contains three to eight gallons of hazardous materials in kitchens, bathrooms, garages, and basements. Throwing these materials into the garbage may result in injury to sanitation workers from fires, explosions, or acids.

Hazardous wastes that reach our landfills can leach into the soil, polluting water and threatening all living things.

Substances poured into Oregon's household drains and toilets enter into the sewage treatment process, eventually impacting fish and wildlife. Substances poured on soil or streets or into storm drains are carried to our streams. As little as one pint of solvent can cause fish kills.

How To Minimize Hazardous Waste In Your Home

- ▶ Use safer alternatives.
- ▶ Read labels before purchasing. Watch for the words "poison," "caution," "warning," and "danger." Follow label directions.
- ▶ Buy only what you need and will use up.
- ▶ If you do have products left over, give them to friends, neighbors, or charitable institutions to use up.

Handle Hazardous Waste The Recommended Way

Call the Household Hazardous Waste Hotline at 1-800-732-9253 or contact your local solid waste department or your garbage hauler to find out if your community has a household hazardous waste collection facility, is planning a one-day event or has a drug take-back site. Facilities and events provide a place where residents can bring unused and unwanted hazardous substances to a central location for proper sorting and disposal.

Until you safely dispose of these materials, you can:

- ▶ Keep containers upright, tightly closed, with labels intact.
- ▶ Keep unused portions and empty containers (check labels to see if an empty container can be triple-rinsed and safely discarded in your household garbage.)
- ▶ Never mix substances or pour into other containers.
- ▶ Avoid burning or reusing empty containers.
- ▶ Keep out of reach of children, pets, and wildlife.

What Should You Do If Hazardous Waste Spills?

Your first concern must be for your own safety. If you have been exposed to toxic materials, call the **Oregon Poison Control Center** at 1-800-452-7165. In the Portland area, call 503-494-8968. For medical emergencies or large spills, call 911 or your fire department.

- ▶ Read the product label for exposure and spill information.
- ▶ Keep the area well ventilated.
- ▶ Keep children and pets away.
- ▶ Wear gloves and protective clothing.
- ▶ Contain and cover the spill with absorbent material such as cat litter, clay, or sand.
- ▶ Sweep and scoop the material into a container with a lid or doubled plastic bags. Secure well.
- ▶ Finally, wash the surface well with soap and water.
- ▶ For special instruction for cleaning up mercury spills, visit the DEQ Web site: www.deq.state.or.us/lq/mercurycleanup.htm

Where to find toxins in your home

IN THE GARAGE:

Antifreeze
Car wax/polish
Motor oil
Gasoline
Diesel fuel
Radiator flushes
Rust preventatives
Transmission/brake fluid

IN THE HOUSE:

Ammonia-based cleaners
Oven cleaners
Spot removers
Drain cleaners
Deodorizers
Moth Balls
Mercury thermometers
Aerosol sprays
Floor wax
Medicines
Furniture polish

IN THE WORKSHOP/ HOBBY AREA:

Old paint
Paint thinner
Brush cleaners
Paint removers
Wood preservatives
Art supplies
Photographic chemicals

IN THE YARD:

Insect sprays
Weed killers
Pool & spa chemicals
Pesticides
Fertilizers



For information on HHW collection events or drug take-back facilities call 1-800-732-9253. For more information, call your garbage hauler, local government solid waste department, or the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality at 503-229-5696, or toll free 1-800-452-4011. If you live in the Portland area, call Metro at 503-234-3000.

Household Hazardous Waste

CHEMICAL HAZARDS IN THE HOME

PRODUCT	DISPOSAL SUGGESTIONS	SUBSTITUTES & PRECAUTIONS
Aerosols	Best: Put only empty cans in trash. 2nd Best: Take full or partially full cans to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use non-aerosol products. Safe Use: Store in cool place. Do not burn or put in trash compactor.
Batteries: Rechargeable	Best: Call 1-800-8-BATTERY or go to www.rbr.org to find a rechargeable battery drop site. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Avoid battery-operated products.
Bleach: Chlorine	Best: Use up/give away. Rinse empty container and put in trash. 2nd Best: Flush small amounts down drain with plenty of water. Take large amounts to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use ½ cup borax per washer load, or use hydrogen peroxide in a 3 percent solution. Safe Use: Never mix chlorine with ammonia or strong acids like toilet bowl cleaner. The combination produces hazardous fumes.
Detergent Cleaners	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Dilute and wash down sink or take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use nontoxic alternatives. (See below.) Safe Use: Liquid dishwashing detergent is mildest, laundry detergent is moderate, automatic dishwasher detergent is harshest. Use mildest product for your needs.
Drain Cleaners	Best: Use up/give away. Put empty container in trash. 2nd Best: Dilute small amounts and wash down sink or take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use nontoxic alternatives. DO NOT pour grease down the drain. Pour boiling water down drain weekly. Use plunger or plumber's snake. Pour ½ cup baking soda and ½ cup vinegar down drain. Let stand 15 minutes. Pour boiling water down drain.
Medicines: Unneeded Or Expired	Best: Take to drug take-back site or event. 2nd Best: Take drugs out of original container and mix with coffee grounds or cat litter in a sealable container. Place in trash as close to garbage pickup as possible.	Safe Use: Check contents of medicine chest regularly. Old medications may lose their effectiveness, but not their toxicity.
Mercury Containing Products: Fluorescent Light Tubes, Thermometers, Thermostats	Best: Take to HHW collection site. 2nd Best: Take to retail site with fluorescent light take-back program.	Instead: When you purchase a new thermometer or thermostat, choose a mercury-free product.
Metal Polishes	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site	Instead: Use nontoxic alternatives. Safe Use: Use only in well-ventilated area. (See below).
Mildew Remover	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Scrub with a vinegar and salt mixture.
Mothballs	Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Clean clothes before storing. Store in tightly sealed container. Safe Use: Don't use in living areas. Air out clothing before use.
Oven Cleaner	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use a non-chlorinated scouring powder, a pumice stick or a copper or steel wool scrubbing pad. Use cleaner without lye.
Toilet Bowl Cleaner	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use a paste of borax and lemon juice. Scrub with a stiff brush.
Window Cleaner	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Spray on solution of ¼ vinegar in 1 quart warm water; wipe dry with newspaper or squeegee.
Wood Cleaners, Polishes, and Waxes	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Damp mop wood floors with mild vegetable oil soap. Rub black heel marks with a paste of baking soda and water. For furniture, apply olive or almond oil. Let stand for several hours. Polish with a soft dry cloth.

PESTICIDES AND YARD PRODUCTS

Fertilizers	Best: Use up/give away. Put empty bag in garbage. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use compost and mulches to improve soil. Select slow release fertilizers and never exceed application rates on product label.
Herbicides	Best: If not banned, use up/give away. Triple-rinse empty containers and apply rinse water as directed. Put empty containers in trash. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site. DO NOT dispose of in garbage, sewer, septic tank or storm drain.	Instead: Cover garden with plastic or mulch such as alfalfa straw to prevent weed germination. Grow a healthy lawn to out-compete weeds. Pull weeds when they first appear. Safe Use: Buy only the amount you need.
Insecticides	Best: If not banned, use up/give away. Triple-rinse empty containers and apply rinse water as directed. Put empty containers in trash. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site. DO NOT dispose of in garbage, sewer, septic tank or storm drain.	Instead: Use nontoxic alternatives. (See below.) Safe Use: Buy only the amount you need.
Rodenticides	Best: If not banned, use up/give away. Triple-rinse empty containers and apply rinse water as directed. Put empty containers in trash. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site. DO NOT dispose of in garbage, sewer, septic tank or storm drain.	Instead: For mice and rats: Use traps baited with a peanut butter, oatmeal and honey mixture. Use glue boards or sticky traps. Baits with <i>warfarin</i> are lethal to rodents, yet relatively safe for household use. For moles: Do you really want to kill them? They are voracious insect eaters. Scissor traps are effective. For gophers: use spring traps or box traps.

CHEMICAL HAZARDS IN THE GARAGE AND HOME WORKSHOP

Asphalt Roofing Compounds	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: No substitutes. Safe Use: Do not use indoors.
Auto: Antifreeze	Best: Take to HHW collection site or transfer station with antifreeze collection tank. 2nd Best: Contact sewage treatment plant for permission to flush small amounts down the sewer. Do not flush into septic tank or pour in storm drain.	Instead: Propylene Glycol-based antifreeze is less toxic than Ethylene Glycol-based. Check the antifreeze each year to see if it really needs to be replaced.
Auto: Batteries	Best: Take old batteries to battery retailer or wholesaler for recycling. (It is illegal to dispose of auto batteries.) 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Buy longer-life batteries so you have fewer batteries to dispose.
Auto: Degreasers	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site. Do not mix with used oil.	Instead: Choose strong detergent type over solvent type.
Auto: Used Motor Oil and Transmission Fluid	Best: Recycle at HHW collection site, recycling center or at curbside (if available). DO NOT pour on ground, in a ditch, or down drain. Absorbent-containing "easy-change" boxes cannot be recycled.	Instead: Have your oil changed at a service station that has its oil recycled.
Auto: Waxes and Polishes	Best: Use up/give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: No substitutes.
Paints: Water-Based and Latex	Best: If paint does not contain lead or mercury (generally, if manufactured since 1973), use up or give away. 2nd Best: Take to PaintCare collection site. (www.paintcare.org) 3rd Best: Allow to harden in can, then dispose of in garbage.	Instead: Use low VOC or zero VOC paints. Use whitewash (a combination of hydrated lime, water, and salt) for fences, barns, basements and outbuildings. Estimate paint needs accurately. Safe Use: Ventilate area well.
Paints: Oil-Based and Varnishes	Best: If paint does not contain lead or mercury, use up or give away. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site. 3rd Best: Allow to harden in can, then dispose of in garbage.	Instead: Use water-based or latex paints. Estimate paint needs accurately. Safe Use: Ventilate area well. DO NOT use near open flame.
Paint Strippers	Best: Use up/give away. Let the empty container air outside, wrap scrapings in several layers of newspaper and put in garbage. 2nd Best: Take to HHW collection site.	Instead: Use a scraper, heat gun or sandpaper to remove paint. Use strippers with less toxic ingredients. Safe Use: Use in well-ventilated area. Use precautions against lead-bearing dust found in some old paints.
Paint Thinners	Best: Let settle, pour off thinner for reuse. 2nd Best: Take sludge and unwanted thinner to HHW collection site. DO NOT pour down a storm drain, down an inside drain or on the ground.	Instead: Avoid paint thinners by choosing water-based paints.

CONSIDER USING NON-TOXIC ALTERNATIVES

Cleaners

- ▶ Use baking soda, whiting (powdered chalk, sold at hardware and paint stores), or a non-chlorinated scouring powder such as Bon Ami™ for general cleaning.
- ▶ Use full-strength vinegar plus salt to remove grease.
- ▶ Use a pumice stick to clean ovens and grills and remove rust from tools.
- ▶ Use half the recommended amount of automatic dishwasher detergent.

Recipes For All-Purpose Cleaners:

1. ½ cup household ammonia, ½ cup white vinegar, ½ gallon water, ¼ cup baking soda.
2. 1 tsp. liquid soap (castile), 1 tsp. borax, 1 qt. water, ¼ cup vinegar.

Polish

- Copper Polish** - Use lemon juice and salt.
- Aluminum Polish** - Inside pan, use 2 tbsp. of cream of tartar to one quart of water. Bring to boil and simmer 10 minutes. Outside pan, use baking soda and scouring pad.
- Chrome Polish** - Use baking soda or vinegar. To remove scum, try baby oil.
- Brass Polish** - Apply thick coating of ½ tsp. salt, ½ cup vinegar and enough flour to make a paste. Let set for 15 - 60 minutes. Rinse with water. (Do not use on metal with a lacquer coating.)
- Stainless Steel** - Use baking soda and a plastic scouring pad.
- Silver** - Rub with baking soda or toothpaste and soft sponge; or boil silver for 3 minutes with sheet of aluminum foil, 2 inches of water, 1 tsp. baking soda, and 1 tsp. salt.

Insects On Plants:

- ▶ Spray with soapy water and rinse after a few minutes.
- ▶ Place tobacco on potted plant soil.

For Slugs and Snails:

- ▶ Use barriers such as copper, diatomaceous earth, ashes or lime around affected areas.
- ▶ Use traps to catch slugs.

For Ants:

- ▶ Use commercial sticky barriers to block ants.
- ▶ Sprinkle boric acid on trails and where ants are found in nooks and crannies (away from pets.)

For Fleas:

- ▶ Vacuum house weekly.
- ▶ Bathe pet if flea population builds up.
- ▶ Launder pet bedding frequently.
- ▶ Use flea comb to remove fleas.