

Houston-Galveston Area Council

GET THE POWER OVER HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS



**How to Properly Manage
Household Hazardous Waste**

● What is Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)?

Most of the chemicals we use in our homes are considered “hazardous” and become “waste” when we want to throw them away. You can find HHW all over your home:

Garage:

- Paint, motor oil, fertilizer, antifreeze, pesticides, pool chemicals

House:

- Cleaning chemicals, pet supplies (flea/tick sprays, collars or shampoos), bug sprays and baits, mercury thermometers

Bathroom:

- Tub and tile cleaners, hydrogen peroxide, isopropyl alcohol, nail polish and remover, pharmaceuticals

If your home is like most in America, you’ve probably got quite a collection. Americans generate 1.6 million tons of household hazardous waste per year. The average home can accumulate as much as 100 pounds.

TO IDENTIFY HHW LOOK FOR THESE WARNING WORDS ON PRODUCT LABELS:

Toxic **WARNING**
Poison **Flammable**
Corrosive
Combustible
Danger
Caution



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The Risks of HHW at Home

Have you ever used different chemicals to clean your bathroom or kitchen, and noticed that you get a headache or feel slightly dizzy? That's because some products give off dangerous fumes and can react with other chemicals. HHW products can also pose a poisoning risk for children.

Cleaning products and other household hazardous wastes should never be mixed. To prevent dangerous reactions, follow directions on the product container.

The Risks of HHW to Our Water Supply

People do not realize when they pour HHW down the drain or toilet, onto the ground, or into storm drains and septic tanks, that they are adding to a dangerous environmental problem. Manage your HHW properly to avoid contaminating our water.

Reducing HHW in the Home

The best way to manage household hazardous waste is to avoid creating it! It's easy to use cleaning alternatives. See our "recipes" on the next page. If you need to use products with hazardous components, use only the amount needed. If the product is still usable and in its original container, a friend, neighbor or community group may be able to use it.



1-800-CLEANUP

It is important to not wash hazardous waste down the drain, such as cleansers, paint, fertilizers and pesticides.

The Alternatives - Cheaper and Less Toxic

Non-toxic substitutes for HHW cleaning products can be effective and inexpensive cleansers and sanitizers.

Glass Cleaner

- Fill clean spray bottle with 1/8 cup white vinegar and 1 cup water.
- Try using newspaper for a great lint-free method of cleaning windows.

Drain Opener

- Pour baking soda and vinegar down the drain and follow with boiling water.

All-Purpose Cleaner

- Fill a clean spray bottle with hot water.
- Mix with 1 teaspoon liquid soap or borax (a soap instead of a detergent).
- Add 1 teaspoon white vinegar or lemon juice to cut grease.
- Shake bottle gently to mix.

Bathroom and Kitchen Surface Cleaner

- Dissolve 4 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 quart warm water for a cleaning solution or use baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge.



Elbow grease is another great non-toxic alternative!

safe & easy



● More Tips for Reducing HHW

- Microfiber cloth is made of specially engineered fibers that may be used wet or dry, without additional chemicals and also be re-used over and over again.
- Buy the least hazardous product. Product labels will help you pick out the least hazardous alternative.
- Buy only what you need: Is bulk purchasing necessary for your needs? Avoid creating leftover product by purchasing too much.
- Excess paint is one of the most common household hazardous wastes. Figuring out how much paint you will need before starting a job will save you time, money and prevent unnecessary waste.



Wall Paint Estimator

- Add together the length of each wall.
- Multiply the sum by the wall height.
- Subtract 20 for each door and 15 for each window.
- Divide total by 350 to find how many gallons to buy.

Ceiling Paint Estimator

- Multiply the length of the ceiling times its width.
- Divide total by 350 to see how many gallons to buy.

reduce

● How do You Safely Dispose of HHW?

Why not just throw it in the trash? Landfills in Texas won't accept HHW because of the dangers associated with it and the fact that it is often in liquid form. When people place HHW in their household trash, it is a risk to sanitation workers who handle it. It is important to properly manage your HHW to avoid harm to yourself, others and to the environment.

● HHW Collection Facilities, Days and Events

Some communities have permanent HHW or BOPA (Batteries, Oil, Paint and Antifreeze) collection facilities or host one-day collection events throughout the year. On collection days, qualified professionals collect hazardous wastes at a central location to ensure safe waste disposal.

Check 1-800-CLEANUP, www.cleanup.org or your local city's Solid Waste Department to find a collection facility or event near you.

● When you bring HHW to a collection center or event:

- HHW should be kept in its original container and be clearly labeled.
- Wear protective gloves when handling HHW and do not smoke, eat or drink around chemicals.
- Make sure chemicals do not spill, leak or mix.
- When transporting HHW, make sure that you have adequate ventilation.

● HHW Collection Sites and Events will not accept:

- Ammunition
- Radioactive Waste
- Explosives
- Infectious/Medical Waste
- Business Waste



● For more Information on HHW

- Earth 911: www.cleanup.org or 1-800-Cleanup
- US Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- American Association of Poison Control Centers: www.aapcc.org



This document was produced with funds provided by a grant from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to the Houston-Galveston Area Council.