

NORTH DAKOTA

WHAT IS HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE?



State Department of Health
and Consolidated Laboratories
Division of Waste Management

WHAT IS HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE?

Most people are not really sure what household hazardous wastes really are.

We tend to think that household products offered for sale must be safe to use and dispose. Unfortunately many products contain hazardous ingredients that can harm people and the environment.

When these products are no longer wanted they become *household hazardous wastes*. Along with the choice of purchasing these materials comes the responsibility to manage the waste properly.

Hazardous wastes in the home usually come from ordinary household products such as cleaners, medications, solvents, paints, automotive care, fertilizers, pesticides, drain openers, fuels, polishes, glues, and other common home chemicals.

When a paint can, old battery, or other household waste is thrown away, the chemical substances or residues become a *household hazardous waste*. These materials may adversely affect our quality of life or damage our environment.

An easy way to familiarize yourself with most household hazardous wastes is to look on container labels for dangers symbols. *Always read the product label.* However, some hazardous wastes such as used motor oil may not be identified or labeled.

WHY IS IT HAZARDOUS?

TOXIC (poisonous) - toxic materials can be fatal if swallowed, inhaled or absorbed through the skin. Some "normally" safe items may become toxic if mixed together.

CARCINOGENIC (cancer causing) - some toxic materials may also cause cancer. This is dependent of the length and level of exposure and the toxicity.

CORROSIVE (acidic and basic) - corrosive materials may cause severe irritation or destruction of tissue. Acids and bases may be solids, liquids or gases. Never mix or store acids with bases. Store acids away from peroxides and other oxidizers.

IGNITABLE (flammable) - ignitables can combust and start fires. Some ignitables produce vapors which may be ignited by a distant flame or spark.

REACTIVE (stored chemical energy) - some chemicals react violently with air, water, heat, or when mixed with other chemicals. This includes aerosol cans which may burst when heated, punctured or dented.

REACTIVE (explosive) - ammunition, black or smokeless gunpowder, and fireworks may detonate or ignite spontaneously.

INFECTIOUS (medical) - not hazardous by definition, but requires special care for disposal of needles, body fluids, etc.

SOME COMMON HOME PRODUCTS.

PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES - are very dangerous chemicals. Follow label directions very carefully. Unlike many household products, these are dangerous during storage, use, and disposal.

ANTIFREEZE - is toxic to humans and pets. Ethylene glycol is very sweet and children and animals will ingest it (new and used).

MEDICATIONS - are prescription and over the counter drugs. Keep these locked away from children and pets. Always follow label directions. Never used old drugs.

GASOLINE - is **EXTREMELY** dangerous. Use only containers approved for storage. Ensure the container has a flame arrestor (a fine wire mesh screen in the spout).

SOLVENTS - are used in aerosol cans, glues, paints, degreasers, nail polish removers and other household products. Solvents are often ignitable and toxic. Some common solvents are carcinogenic.

PRESSURE VESSELS - are aerosol cans, butane cylinders and propane tanks. These can be ignitable and reactive.

USED MOTOR OIL - is a toxic waste. It is a violation of state law to dispose used oil in a landfill or illegal dumping. There are many free collections centers across our state. Please don't pollute our waters.

WHAT CAN "YOU" DO?

1. **READ and follow label directions** carefully. Usually it will tell you:
 - * active ingredients.
 - * directions for use.
 - * directions for storage.
 - * directions for disposal.
 - * potential hazards.
 - * warnings and cautions.
2. **BEFORE PURCHASING** any product:
 - * **Compare** the labels of similar products.
 - * **Choose** the least hazardous product.
 - * **Determine** the least amount required.
3. **REDUCE** the amount of household products you turn into a hazardous waste:
 - * Don't buy more than you need.
 - * Use all the product.
 - * Give leftovers to someone to use.
 - * Try non-toxic alternatives.
 - * Avoid products packaged in aerosols.
4. **REUSE** chemical products:
 - * Allow used solvents and thinners to settle in a sealed jar, pour off clear liquid and use solvent again.
 - * Use old paint as a primer.
5. **RECYCLE** household wastes:
 - * Recycle automotive batteries.
 - * Take used motor oil to a collection center, most in ND are free to use.
 - * Some companies redistill solvents.

WHAT CAN "YOU" DO?

6. **STORAGE SAFETY** - safe storage will protect your family and the environment:
 - * **Use original container** with its label intact. Never use food containers.
 - * **Lock storage areas;** medicine cabinets, closets, sheds and the garage.
 - * **Store ignitables/flammables outside.**
 - * **Separate hazard types.**
 - * **Clean Out and Inventory** your storage areas to minimize the quantity.
7. **USE AND DISPOSAL** - safe use and disposal will decrease waste generated:
 - * **Protect** yourself during use with goggles, masks, gloves, shields, etc.
 - * **Personal Hygiene;** don't touch your eyes, food, face without washing and don't smoke when handling chemicals.
 - * **Ventilate** your work area and when possible use the product outdoors.
 - * **Clean Up Spills** immediately!
 - * **Never Mix Chemicals!**

For more information on household hazardous waste, please contact:

**ND State Department of Health
and Consolidated Laboratories
Division of Waste Management
1200 Missouri Ave, Room 302
Bismarck, ND 58502-5520
(701) 221-5166**

REDUCE! REUSE! RECYCLE!