



What is Household Hazardous Waste?

A household hazardous waste (HHW) is any waste generated from a household activity that exhibits the following characteristics:

- **Toxicity** - Causing injury or death upon ingestion, absorption or inhalation.
- **Ignitability** - Capable of catching fire.
- **Corrosivity** - Burning or irritating to human tissue or the surface of a material.
- **Reactivity** - Capable of causing toxic gas release or explosion.



Why are Household Hazardous Wastes a Concern?

Environmental and human health problems can result

from:

- **Improper Use** - Mixing chemicals can generate toxic fumes
- **Improper Handling** - Chemical exposure may cause adverse health effects
- **Improper Storage** - Materials not safely stored
- **Improper Disposal** - Landfills and wastewater treatment plants may not be able to handle hazardous chemicals, causing contaminated soil or water

What Common Products Are Hazardous?

Hazardous materials may include:

Cleaners:

- Parts Cleaners
- Bathroom Cleaners
- Disinfectants
- Ammonia-based cleaners



Paint Products:

- Oil-Based Paint
- Thinners and Turpentine
- Wood Preservatives
- Furniture Strippers

Pesticide Products:

- Insecticides
- Herbicides
- Rat and Mice Poisons
- Flea Collars/Shampoos

Automotive Products:

- Antifreeze
- Transmission/Brake Fluids
- Batteries
- Used Oil

Miscellaneous:

- Photography Chemicals
- Thermostats
- Mercury Batteries
- Glues/Adhesives

How Can I Reduce My Exposure to Household Hazardous Wastes?

Changes in buying, storage and usage habits may reduce your exposure to hazardous products and wastes. The tips listed below are offered as a guide.

Buying Practices:

- Look for and purchase less toxic alternatives.
- Buy only what you need.
- Read the label carefully, paying careful attention to warning labels.



Storage Practices:

- Keep unused products in original containers.
- Never store chemicals in food or beverage containers.
- Preserve labels for directions, disposal suggestions and warnings.
- Store in a cool, dry place.
- Never store household chemicals where small children and pets may reach them.
- Store flammable products outside living quarters and away from ignition sources.

Handling Procedures:

- Avoid mixing different products and/or mixing different brands of the same product, as explosive chemical reactions or toxic materials may result.
- Do not use a "restricted use" pesticide unless you are a trained, certified pesticide applicator.
- Follow directions carefully. Use the amount directed, under the conditions specified, for the purpose listed.
- Do not smoke while working with flammable chemicals.
- Keep away from open flame.
- Provide adequate ventilation.



Protection Devices:

- Wear protective gloves, long sleeves and goggles. Use chemical cartridge respirators when respiratory protection is specified. Personal protective clothing is usually available at home building stores.

Emergency Response:

- Keep the number of the local Poison Control Center, hospital and paramedics near the telephone.
- If you spill a hazardous chemical, do not wash it away. Sprinkle it with sawdust, vermiculite or kitty litter; sweep into a plastic garbage bag and dispose of it in the trash.
- In case a hazardous substance is ingested, keep a one ounce bottle of Ipecac syrup handy to induce vomiting. Induce vomiting only with the advice of a medical expert, as vomiting after ingesting certain chemicals may cause more harm.

This fact sheet was developed by the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, 908 N 2nd Street, Harrisburg PA 17102. For more information, visit our website, www.proprecycles.org, or contact us by email at dorner@proprecycles.org.

Material for this fact sheet was adapted from a fact sheet provided by the Center for Hazardous Materials Research.

We do our part to close the recycling loop and print our publications on recycled paper.