

About Proper Disposal of Household Hazardous Materials

Proper disposal is provided by a collection of facilities across the state called Regional Collection Centers (link). Their packaging and disposal services are free to residents and eligible businesses pay a small fee. HHMs contain many of the chemical types found in industrial and commercial hazardous waste. Though individually less concentrated, aggregated in the trash, in collection vehicles or in the landfill, household hazardous materials should be afforded the same considerations which ban industrial and commercial grade chemical waste from the landfill. Proper disposal is critical in protecting our health, sanitation worker safety and protection of the environment including fish and wildlife as well as protection of our drinking water resources.

Here are some simple rules to follow when disposing of household hazardous materials

Do Not

Dump into ditches, pour down drains or sewers, or place in the trash. Each of these actions has negative consequences.

- Dumping in ditches releases hazardous chemicals directly into the environment
- Pouring down drains and storm sewers has caused explosions in the sewer system, Storm sewers typically empty directly into our lakes and streams.
- Creating a path for hazardous chemicals to impact drinking water, recreation, and aquatic life.
- Placing in the trash easily creates the opportunity for incompatible chemicals to mix. Chemical reactions can result in explosions, fires, and toxic fumes causing personal injury and damage to garbage trucks and equipment.

Do

- Locate your nearest Regional Collection Center and schedule an appointment to take your hazardous materials for proper disposal and recycling.
- Contact your local solid waste agency about proper disposal methods
- Look for local options for recycling electronic waste, automotive products and fluorescent bulbs.

Special Note on Handling Containers

To reduce the amount of product and/or packaging used, many cleaning products are available in concentrated form or with refillable containers.

Most cleaning product bottles contain recyclable plastic, boxes contain recyclable paperboard and aerosol cans contain recyclable metal. Empty containers and boxes can be recycled where collection programs exist, contact your local solid waste agency for more information.

What happens to my Household hazardous waste after I bring it in to the Regional Collection Center?

The employees at the RCC will keep your materials in their original container, sort them by type (Corrosive, acid, aerosol), then place them in 55 gallon barrels. These barrels are sealed and stored in an explosive proof storage unit until they are picked up by a licensed Hazardous Waste Contractor. Once back at the Hazardous Waste Contractor's Facility, they are managed as follows:

Corrosive liquids

Corrosive liquids such as drain cleaners and pool chemicals are neutralized at a treatment facility.

Lead acid batteries

Lead in lead acid batteries is reclaimed at smelters in the United States.

Mercury

Mercury is recycled and reused in commercial applications.

Oil-based paints, solvents and thinners

These flammable liquids are blended into fuel mixtures and burned for energy at facilities such as cement kilns.

Pesticides and poisons

These wastes are incinerated or placed in hazardous waste landfills.

Used motor oil

Used motor oil can be reprocessed into fuel that can be used in furnaces for heat, or in power plants to generate electricity. It can also be used in industrial and utility boilers, and blended for marine fuels. Used motor oil can also be re-refined into lubricating oils that meet the same API specifications as virgin motor oil.

For the location of your Regional Collection Center go to SafeSmartSolutions.org