

Safe, Smart, Solutions for Iowa



If you use or store your household chemicals improperly, they could end up in the wrong package.

Cleaning Products

The variety of household cleaning products on the market today is overwhelming. There are products for every possible need, and we are encouraged to buy them all.

Many cleaners contain hazardous chemicals that can cause health concerns such as skin irritations, aggravation of respiratory diseases, and possibly cancer. Most importantly many are harmful or even fatal if swallowed or inhaled. Children are particularly at risk as they may mistake a cleaning product for a beverage. Many cleansers are also flammable, caustic or reactive with other materials. Cleaning products

can also pollute the environment if used or disposed of improperly.

The back of this sheet contains some suggestions for safer alternatives. You probably already have many of these in your cupboards. However if you do decide to use commercial cleaning products please remember these guidelines:

- ▶ Buy the least hazardous product needed to get the job done. For instance, it is better, for health and environmental reasons to use oven cleaner labeled "No caustic fumes" or "No lye".

- ▶ Follow the precautions on the label. It may recommend wearing gloves, goggles or using with ventilation.
- ▶ Store out of the reach of children and **NEVER** store cleaning products in a container that once contained a food or beverage. A child may mistakenly eat or drink it.
- ▶ Never mix bleach or products that contain bleach with vinegar, ammonia, or products that contain ammonia such as toilet bowl cleaner. The combination produces a toxic gas.
- ▶ If you have product that you no longer want, give it to someone else who can responsibly use it for its intended purpose.
- ▶ If the product is unusable bring it to a Toxic Cleanup Day or Regional Collection Center. For a list of regional collection centers, please visit our web site at www.safesmartsolutions.org.

Safer Solutions

Below are just a few of the many safer alternatives.

Air freshener

- ▶ Leave open boxes of baking soda in refrigerators and freezers.
- ▶ Open windows for good ventilation and use the stove fan when cooking.
- ▶ Set out a saucer of vinegar or boil a tablespoon of white vinegar in one cup water.
- ▶ Boil cinnamon and cloves.

Drain opener

- ▶ To prevent clogs use a drain strainer to catch food particles and hair. Occasionally flush drains with boiling water to melt away grease build up.
- ▶ Use a plunger to break up drain clogs. Do not use this method after a commercial drain cleaner has been used.

Furniture polish

- ▶ Mix two parts vegetable or olive oil and one part lemon juice; apply with a soft cloth.

Glass and surface cleaner

- ▶ Mix ¼ cup vinegar and one quart water. (Do not use this as a substitute for windshield wiper solution as it may damage the pump.)

Disinfectant

- ▶ Cleaning with soap and hot water will kill some bacteria.
- ▶ Mix ½ Cup borax with 1 gallon hot water, do not rinse off to inhibit mold growth.

Scouring powder

- ▶ Baking soda on a damp sponge can be used as a gentle abrasive.

For more information please visit our web site at www.safesmartsolutions.org



Department of Natural Resources
 Wallace State Office Building
 502 East 9th Street
 Des Moines Iowa 50319-0034

