Disposal of Household Hazardous Waste

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The average household contains between three and ten gallons of materials that are hazardous to human health or to the natural environment. Many of these products are in your kitchen, bathroom, garage, or garden shed. Motor oil, pesticides, antifreeze, wood preservatives, paints, batteries and some household cleaners are hazardous. They contain solvents, caustics, petroleum products, heavy metals, or other hazardous chemicals. Because of their chemical nature, they can poison, corrode, explode, or burst into flame when handled improperly. When you place these products in the trash or pour them down drains, their hazardous chemicals can injure others. They also can contaminate all environmental media including drinking water sources, air or soil. Some may interfere with operations of sewer plants or home septic systems. When you discard these products, they become household hazardous wastes.

The best way to avoid a hazardous household disposal problem is to avoid generating hazardous waste. Before you buy a product, read the label and make sure that it will do what you want. Buy only those house, yard, and automobile products you need. Use product safely. Purchase in smallest quantity for the job you want to do. If you cannot use all the product, think of someone who can. A neighbor, school, youth group, church or service organization may be glad to share your remaining products. Organize a waste-products material exchange for products like cleaning solutions, paint, fertilizer, gasoline, or insect spray.

USE only the amount of a product that is absolutely necessary. USE hazardous household products as infrequently as possible. USE safer substitutes when they are available.

Prevent drinking water contamination. NEVER bury household waste. NEVER dump waste along the side of the road. NEVER pour wastes into any drain or storm sewer. NEVER dump waste into a stream, pond, or lake.

What is the best way to dispose of potentially hazardous household products? Read and follow label directions on proper use of a product and disposal of the empty container. Some household products are more hazardous than others. Some labels include a warning about getting the contents on your skin. Wrap these containers in newspaper before placing them in the trash. This will help protect disposal company employees.

If you must dispose of a household product, follow label directions. If the label does not explain proper disposal directions, use the method recommended on the following chart.
Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Chart

This chart offers general disposal recommendations for potentially hazardous products which you may have in your home. Products are listed alphabetically under the preferred disposal method. Alternate disposal methods are listed in brackets for some products and should be used only when the preferred method is not available in your community.

**Down the Drain**
If a product goes down the drain in the course of normal use, small quantities can usually be disposed of down the drain. Start water running, slowly discard the product, allowing water to run. Using plenty of water, rinse the container thoroughly, and discard the container as household refuse. If the capacity of the sewage or septic system is small, or if disposing of large amounts, recycle the product or wait for a hazardous waste collection day.

- aluminum cleaners
- ammonia base cleaners
- antifreeze* (less than 1 gal.) [special recycling center]
- basin, tub, tile cleaners
- bleach
- depilatories/hair removers
- disinfectants*
- drain cleaners* (lye base)
- hair permanent solution
- hair straightener
- medicines, liquid*
- medicines, nonliquid
- (for prescription medicines, ask your pharmacist for proper disposal method)
- oven cleaners* (lye base)
- paint/varnish stripper* (lye base)
- perfume
- rust remover (phosphoric acid base)
- shaving lotion
- upholstery/rug cleaners (detergent base)
- window cleaners
- windshield washer fluid

*May interfere with the operation of the septic system. Use special caution.

**Household Refuse**
Discard the container with household refuse that goes to a sanitary landfill.

- aerosol cans (empty)
- auto body repair parts
- cleaners (powder/abrasive)
- cosmetics
- nail polish [solidify/double wrap]
- shoe polish [solidify/double wrap]

**Wrapped Refuse**
Wrap the container in newspaper and then plastic before adding it to household refuse.

- fertilizer (liquid, less than 1 gal.)
- fertilizer (less than 5 lbs. dry)
- glue (water base)

**Solidify/Double Wrap**
Solidify the residue with absorbent material such as kitty litter, sawdust, charcoal, or sand. Allow it to dry, then double wrap the container in plastic and discard with household refuse.

- c er polish
- silver polish
- shoe polish, liquid
### Special Recycling Center

Take these products to a special recycling facility or return them to the store or manufacturer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>automatic transmission fluid</td>
<td>brake fluid</td>
<td>light lubricating oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>automobile batteries</td>
<td>diesel fuel</td>
<td>motor oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batteries (D cell or smaller)</td>
<td>fuel oil</td>
<td>paint, latex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batteries (mercury)</td>
<td>kerosene</td>
<td>smoke detector (ionization type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[return to manufacturer]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you cannot locate a facility which will accept any of these products, treat the product as Do Not Discard-Collection Day (below).

### Do Not Discard-Collection Day

Do not discard these materials. Store them for community household hazardous waste collection or call your local Health Department or the Nevada State Division of Environmental Protection for proper disposal procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
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<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>carburetor cleaner</td>
<td>paint: oil base</td>
<td>primer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chrome polish/wax (solvent base)</td>
<td>paint: primer</td>
<td>rust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degreasing chemicals</td>
<td>paint: rust</td>
<td>stain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dry cleaning fluid</td>
<td>paint: stain</td>
<td>varnish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiberglass (epoxy resin) [solidify resin and hardener, then treat as wrapped refuse]</td>
<td>paint: wood preservative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flea collar</td>
<td>paintbrush cleaner (solvent base)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floor polish</td>
<td>paint remover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fluorescent lamp ballast (manufactured prior to 1978 or without label stating it contains no PCBs)</td>
<td>paint thinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fungicides</td>
<td>pesticides or fertilizer/pesticide combinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furniture polish (solvent base)</td>
<td>photo processing chemicals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gasoline</td>
<td>polish or wax (auto)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glue (solvent base)</td>
<td>poison (rat/mouse)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insect sprays/garden insecticides</td>
<td>roach/ant killer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mildew (fungicide)</td>
<td>shoe dye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mothballs</td>
<td>spot remover (solvent base)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nail polish remover</td>
<td>swimming pool chemicals (undiluted)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needles, medical (syringes) recap, wrap in paper, place in puncture proof container (wrapped refuse)</td>
<td>turpentine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>upholstery/rug cleaners (solvent base)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weed killers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The suggestions contained in this publication advise safe disposal of products using the best technology available at the present time. The authors assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of the procedures described.*
Some Special Considerations

Motor Oil

Auto service or repair stations may accept used motor oil for recycling. If they do not accept oil, they may post a notice telling customers where to recycle oil. Drain the oil filter thoroughly. Wrap drained oil filter in newspaper and discard with household refuse. To dispose of used motor oil, first drain the oil through a funnel into a clean container that has a tightly secured lid. Then deliver it to your local oil recycling center or place with other curbside recyclables. The Nevada Office of Community Services or your local Health Department can also help you find the nearest center that accepts used motor oil.

Pesticides

The group of chemicals known as "pesticides" includes products such as insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rat and mouse poisons and pet flea collars and sprays. Homeowners often store unused pesticides for many years. Do not use the following banned pesticides: aldrin, chlordane, DBCP, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, kepone, mirex, silvex, toxaphene, or 2,4,5-T. For information on which pesticides are legal to use in Nevada, or how to dispose of banned pesticides, contact your local University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Faculty or the Nevada State Department of Agriculture.

Take special precautions when disposing of empty pesticide containers. Never work with pesticide products or containers around food areas. Use an outside faucet area for mixing and rinsing. Follow directions on the label or dispose of as follows. Rinse containers for liquid formulations with water three times and puncture plastic and metal containers to prevent reuse. Rinse sprayer three times; first with clean water, then soapy water, then clean water. Apply first rinse water from container or sprayer in the same way the chemical was used. Apply second and third rinses to a similar area but not over the applied pesticide. Wrap the container securely in plastic wrap or newspaper and dispose of it with other household refuse, or as local regulations direct. Empty bags and fiberboard cans that contained pesticide powders or dusts completely. Puncture, wrap and place the container with other household waste.

Aerosols

Discard only completely empty aerosol cans. Before discarding, spray the contents outside and away from humans or animals until the can is completely empty. Then discard the can with household refuse. Never put pressurized cans, even empty ones, in a trash compactor or incinerator.

Recycling/Collection Day Programs

Recycle as many products as possible. Call the recycling center before you take a product to be sure it is a product the center will accept. Take products that cannot be recycled to a hazardous waste collection site or store safely until a hazardous waste collection day.

A collection day program is one in which citizens bring hazardous materials from households to a central site on a specified day. Communities doing collection days identify what materials they will accept and publicize the list with instructions on how to transport the materials to the central location.

If a waste collection site is not available in your area, work with elected officials to set up a proper disposal system.

Remember the Rules

- Buy only what you need, and use all of the product. Give leftover products, in their original container, to others who may use them.
- Use nontoxic alternatives whenever possible.
- Read labels carefully, observing the precautions for use. Use the product at the recommended strength. Follow the recommendations for disposal.
- Never bury waste, dump waste along the side of the road, or pour waste into any drain or storm sewer.
- Store all household chemicals in a cool, dry place. Do not store any hazardous product near a source of water, well or well pump.
- Keep substances in the original container.
- Secure lids tightly.
- Periodically check containers for deterioration.
- Keep substances out of reach of children and pets.

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, under special project number 90-EWQI-I-9234