

PRO P **FACT** Sheet

Common Hazardous Waste

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, P.O. Box 25, Bellwood, PA 16617. For more information, visit our website, www.proprecycles.org, or contact us by email at prop@proprecycles.org. Material for this fact sheet was adapted from a fact sheet provided by the Center for Hazardous Materials Research. Funding for this fact sheet was provided through a grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Forest Lands Beautification Program. We do our part to close the recycling loop and print our publications on recycled paper.