



HAZARDOUS WASTE COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE – HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE JUNE 2022

Household Hazardous Waste Management

Many common products that we use in our daily lives contain potentially hazardous ingredients and require special care when disposed of. Chemicals in illegally or improperly disposed hazardous waste can be released into the environment and contaminate our air, water, and possibly the food we eat. Also, by throwing hazardous chemicals in the garbage, you can cause additional hazards to your garbage handler.

What is Household Hazardous Waste?

Surplus or excess household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients are considered to be “household hazardous waste” or “HHW.” Included are such items as old paints and paint related products, pesticides, pool chemicals, drain cleaners, and degreasers and other car care products. Improper disposal of household hazardous wastes includes pouring them down the drain, on the ground, into storm sewers, or in some cases putting them out with your regular trash. Since these products contain toxic ingredients, they should not be discarded with the trash when other options are available.

What Can You Do to Reduce Household Hazardous Waste?

Avoid creating Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) by:

- Selecting the least toxic product to fit your needs.
- Asking your local merchants, check the links below to find out about nontoxic alternatives to toxic household items and use them.
- Being alert to labels. Words such as "danger," "poison," "warning" and "caution" indicate that a product is harmful.
- Buying only as much as you need - buying in large quantities is not a bargain if half of it has to be discarded!
- If the product is still usable (i.e., it has not been damaged/shelf life expired, etc.) give it away. Ask family, friends, neighbors, or community groups, such as the Little League or Habitat for Humanity if they can use your leftover products. Also, you may be able to find someone who can use your product on one of several online web sites such as [Freecycle](#) or [Craigslist](#).

How to Recycle or Properly Manage Certain HHW

Several HHW items can be easily recycled and many are collected for recycling at your county landfill or transfer station, your local automotive shop, a nearby electronics or hardware store, or by a non-profit organization. Below are some resources for recycling or the proper disposal of some common HHW:

Fluorescent Lamps – There are several responsible management avenues for dealing with fluorescent lamps

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- Many localities are beginning to provide for the collection of fluorescent light bulbs in Virginia. Check with your county or city recycling manager.
- Some retailers collect compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFLs (also called pig tail, corkscrew, and spiral bulbs) at their stores such as Ikea and Home Depot.

Additional information about fluorescent lamps can be found on [DEQ's Pollution Prevention <need link>](#) program.

Used motor oil, oil filters, and antifreeze - contact your locality's Recycling Program about its used oil and related materials recycling, or call DEQ at 800-592-5482 for information on possible recycling locations for Do-It-Yourself oil changes.

Lead acid batteries – All locations that sell motor vehicle batteries are required to take back used batteries for recycling.

Computers, TVs, cell phones and other electronics recycling – Available recycling options for electronics have increased in the past several years. The U.S. EPA has put together an extensive list of available manufacturer and retail electronics recycling programs that can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Unused or unwanted pharmaceuticals – Disposal of extra or left over medicine or prescription drugs is an emerging and complex environmental issue. Virginia DEQ has put together guidelines for the proper disposal of unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs. Those guidelines can be found [here](#).

County and City Household Hazardous Waste Collections in Virginia

How else do you get rid of HHW? Your local solid waste management officials may have a solution for you. Many communities in Virginia offer a variety of options for safely managing HHW such as annual collection events or permanent collection locations. Search on the internet for Virginia county and city web sites for information about local household hazardous waste collection programs.

Use and Handling Tips for Products Containing Hazardous Chemicals

1. Use the product in the manner directed by the manufacturer of the product – carefully read the label!
2. Use the product at the recommended strength.
3. Do not mix chemical substances.
4. Prevent the splashing of chemicals.
5. Wear gloves and eye protection when pouring chemicals.
6. Keep areas well ventilated.
7. Secure lids tightly.

Suggestions for the Storage of HHW



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- Keep substances in the original container.
- Be sure label is securely affixed to the container.
- If the original container is leaking, enclose it in a larger container that is labeled appropriately.
- Keep in a cool, dry place.
- Keep substances out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep incompatible chemical products separated.
- Periodically check containers for deterioration.

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

If your community does not have a HHW collection program, or if you must throw away your HHW before the next collection event, you may put HHW in your regular trash. Below are some tips that may ease the effects of HHW that is disposed of:

- When handling chemicals be safe and use caution at all times.
- Make sure there are no free standing liquids in the product.
- If the product is water-based, allow the liquid to evaporate.
- If the product is not water-based, add kitty litter, saw dust or other absorbent material to the container with the product in it or place the product into a clean, intact and compatible container and add kitty litter to it before disposal.
- This should be done in a container and not on the floor or ground.
- Carefully package any residue to prevent leakage while the material is being transported to a disposal facility.
- CAREFULLY divide larger quantities up into smaller amounts in clean, intact and compatible containers that close tightly and dispose of them over several collection periods.
- Comply with the disposal instruction on the product's label.

Collection Programs

Are you a retailer or local solid waste management official looking for information on how to set up a HHW collection program? Below are some resources that may be of use to you:

- Click [here](#) for a U.S. EPA HHW management manual for one-day community collection programs.

Resource for HHW [Household Hazardous Waste](#)

Information Disclaimer:

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