

Facts About...

Hazardous Waste Program

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PRODUCTS

Household hazardous products represent an unregulated waste stream that can lead to environmental contamination when improperly disposed.

What happens to improperly disposed hazardous household products?

1. Hazardous household products that are flushed down the drain, poured onto the ground, or dumped into storm drains pollute the Bay's waters and possibly your drinking water.
2. Disposal of hazardous materials in a municipal landfill contributes to the potential hazardous chemicals to leach from the landfill and increases landfill space.
3. Materials that easily evaporate contribute to air pollution.

Is a household product hazardous?

Certain signal words on labels indicate a hazardous household product. Look for these signal words. Purchase products containing these labels only as needed and use and dispose of these products in accordance with package instructions and other prudent guidance. Products without these signal words are the least hazardous.

SIGNAL WORD	MEANING
Poison	highly toxic
Danger	extremely flammable, corrosive, or highly toxic
Warning	moderate hazard
Caution	mid/moderate hazard

What can I do?

Reduce the amount of hazardous materials used around home. Substitute less toxic/hazardous alternatives.

Recycle by giving leftovers to a friend, neighbor, or community organization.

Properly Dispose:

When unable to reduce or recycle, follow proper disposal procedures. When in doubt, contact the Maryland Department of the Environment at 800-633-6101 x3345. Local health departments may offer periodic household hazardous waste collection days. Check with the local health department to see what products are accepted.

Common Hazardous Household Products - Disposal and Alternative Options

PRODUCT	DISPOSAL	ALTERNATIVES
Enamel/Oil-based Paint/Stain	Use up, or give to someone who can use it. Otherwise, store for a household hazardous waste collection day.	Use latex or water-based paint
Paint Thinner	Recycle by keeping in a tightly closed jar and allowing paint particles to settle. Strain through a fine mesh sieve and re-use thinner. Mix the sludge with an absorbent (kitty litter and allow to dry in a well-ventilated area, wrap in news paper, and dispose of in trash.	Avoid the use of paint thinners by using water-based paint.
Paint Strippers	Use up, or give to someone who can use it. Otherwise, hold for a household hazardous waste collection day.	If paint does not contain lead, use scraper, heat gun, or sandpaper to remove paint. Water and alkali-based strippers are less toxic.
Latex/water-based paint	Use completely, or give away to someone who can use it. Otherwise, mix unwanted paint with kitty litter and allow to dry. Dispose of dried paint in normal trash.	Use white wash for fences, barns or out buildings that are constructed of lifetime or treated wood. Use new, low-volatility paints.
Pesticides	If the pesticide is not expired, banned, or restricted, use completely. Triple-rinse empty pesticide containers with water. Apply rinse water as per product instructions. Dispose of empty container in trash. Otherwise, hold for household hazardous waste collection day.	Many alternatives exist, including non-chemical controls such as certain insects. Contact your county extension office for more information.
Drain Cleaners	Fully use and dispose of empty container in trash. Otherwise, hold for household hazardous waste collection day.	Use a drain strainer. Don't pour grease down the drain. Use a plunger, or flush with boiling water, baking soda, and vinegar mixture.
Thermometer-Mercury	Don't vacuum up mercury, or touch it. Use cardboard to push mercury droplets together and enclose in a glass bottle. Hold for household hazardous waste collection day.	Use a flex-tape, electronic or other non-mercury thermometer.

