

Household Hazardous Waste



Information about the dangers of, and how to get rid of common household chemicals such as cleaners, paints, auto fluids, etc.

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What is Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)?

These are everyday chemicals and items found in most homes—under the sink, in the basement, garden shed or garage that can pose a serious health threat to you, your family, pets and wildlife if used improperly or not properly stored or disposed of. They include things like cleaners, automotive maintenance products, home improvement products (like paint, adhesives, etc.), hobby products, personal care products, and lawn and garden care products. It also includes electronics because of the vast number of chemicals used to manufacture them and prevent them from catching on fire.

What Can I Look For On A Label To Identify HHW?

- **TOXIC**—These products are poisonous and can cause long-term illnesses. This can include pesticides, paint thinners, automotive products and some cleaners. Look for phrases such as “harmful or fatal if swallowed”, “use only in a well-ventilated area” - meaning the fumes are toxic.
- **FLAMMABLE**—means the product burns easily. Paint, thinners and other solvents plus some auto fluids are flammable. Look for phrases like “do not use near heat or open flame”, “combustible”, or “do not smoke while using this product”.
- **CORROSIVE**—means these products can eat through materials or skin. Oven cleaners, drain cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners and auto batteries are common corrosive products. Look for phrases like “causes severe burns on contact” and “can burn eyes, skin and throat”.
- **REACTIVE**—means the product can spontaneously ignite or create poisonous vapors if mixed with another product or could explode if exposed to heat, air, water or shock. There are fewer consumer products on the market that are still explosive (example: fireworks).
- Other Words to Look For: **WARNING, POISON, DANGER, CAUTION, VOLATILE AND EXPLOSIVE**

If you need to buy the product, buy only what you will use so there are no leftovers. Sometimes there are alternative, safer products that can do the same job and may not pose a potential risk. You can make your own cleaning products, for example (see Butler Co. Recycling & Waste Mgt. Dept. Information series #4, or get recipes from the internet). Many commercial, non-toxic products are sold in most stores as an alternative to toxic products.

If you have these types of products in your home and want to properly dispose of leftovers, follow the instructions on the label. You can also call the Butler County Dept. of Recycling & Waste Mgt. or check out the web site www.recyclebutler.org (phone 724.284.5305) to get information on upcoming hazard-





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ous waste collections in Butler County. Never, ever dump these products down a drain or on to the ground. You also shouldn't place hhw your garbage for trash collection. They simply end up in our environment causing much more serious problems. In a trash truck, they could react with other compounds and catch on fire or cause an explosion.

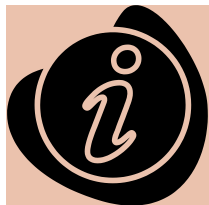
Remember: YOU DUMP IT, YOU DRINK IT!

PLEASE:

- Never leave products within reach of children or animals;
- Never dump hazardous products down any drain or in the yard;
- Never burn or bury hazardous waste;
- Never dispose of hazardous waste with regular household trash;
- Never reuse containers that were once filled with chemicals for other purposes;
- Never mix hazardous waste with any other product unless the label instructs you to.

Did You Know?

Latex paint, when completely dry, is NOT considered hazardous. If it is not dry, leave the lid off, mix cat litter or saw dust in the can, or pour it out on cardboard or newspaper to dry. Also, places that sell paint usually sell packets of paint hardener that harden a gallon of paint in about 30 minutes. Once completely solid, you can throw it away in the regular household trash.



OTHER RESOURCES:

PA Department of Environmental Protection:
<http://www.dep.state.pa.us>
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov>
Federal Emergency Management Agency:
<http://fema.gov>

EMERGENCIES:

Dial "911"

PA Dept. of Environmental Protection Hotline for Environmental Problems 1-866-255-5158

Poison Control Center, call 1-800-222-1222 or dial "911"

