

# Household Hazardous Waste

## Hazardous Materials in the Home

Many of the chemicals you use around the house can harm you, your family and the environment if used or disposed of improperly. It's important to read the product labels to safely store, use, and dispose of potentially hazardous materials. When these chemicals are not used up entirely, they become household hazardous waste. Household hazardous waste must be disposed of properly or it can harm sanitation workers, create problems in sewage treatment plants and landfills, or pollute the water or air.



## Commonly Used Products that May be Hazardous

### Automotive Products

- Antifreeze
- Used oil, brake and transmission fluid
- Gasoline, diesel, and fuel additives
- Solvents and degreasers

### Paints, Solvents and Woodworking Supplies

- Oil-based paints
- Paint thinners and strippers
- Stains and finishes

### Household Cleaners

- Polishes and cleaners
- Drain openers
- Oven cleaners
- Solvents

### Fertilizers, Pesticides and Herbicides

- Weed killer
- Ant poison

### Electronic and Computer Waste

- Computers
- Rechargeable batteries
- Fluorescent light bulbs

### Miscellaneous

- Pool and spa chemicals
- Propane tanks and compressed gas cylinders
- Mercury containing items (switches, thermostats, etc.)
- Film developing chemicals
- Nail polish and removers
- Insect repellents
- Smoke detectors
- Lighter fluid



**Tri-County  
Health  
Department**

Eleven offices along the front range serving the residents of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties  
Administration Office: 7000 East Belleview Avenue, Suite 301 • Greenwood Village, CO, 80111  
Telephone: 303-220-9200 • Fax: 303-220-9208  
Website: [www.tchd.org](http://www.tchd.org)

## Six Tips for Safe Storage, Use and Disposal of Household Hazardous Materials

### 1. *Read the Label FIRST! Labels tell you:*

- How to use the product safely and effectively
- How to store the product safely to keep you and your family safe
- How to dispose of the unused product
- First aid instruction
- Phone numbers to call for help or more information



### 2. *Buy the right product for the job*

Look for the least toxic product that will get the job done. Avoid products labeled “Danger” or “Poison.” Products labeled “Warning” or “Caution” are less hazardous.

*Most to least toxic: Danger → Warning → Caution → No warning label*

### 3. *Buy the right amount for your needs*

Don't stock up on products; purchase only what you need.

### 4. *Keep products in their original containers*

It is very dangerous to put products in food and beverage containers. Children think that something in a familiar juice or soda bottle is good to drink or eat. Also, it will be easier to dispose of products in their original containers.

### 5. *Never mix chemicals*

Don't mix different household chemicals together. The mixture might produce poisonous gas!

### 6. *Dispose of household hazardous waste carefully*

The best way to keep household products from becoming hazardous waste is to use up chemicals for their intended purpose so there is no waste. If you or someone you know cannot use the product, make sure that you dispose of it carefully.

## Household hazardous waste disposal

Household hazardous waste should not be put in the trash, down the drain, or on the ground. Some wastes, like used motor oil, rechargeable batteries, and computers can be recycled at local businesses. Check with the business where you bought the product to see if they will take the waste or recommend a local recycling center.

Do not mix products or pour other chemicals into used motor oil! This can be dangerous and can make the product more difficult to recycle or dispose of.

Water-based latex paint can be safely and legally disposed of in regular household garbage IF it is completely dried out. Mixing the paint with kitty litter, concrete-mix, or soil will help speed the drying process. Empty or dried-out cans of paint can be discarded in the trash if the lids are removed.

Other household hazardous wastes can be disposed of through your local government's household hazardous waste program. For information about household hazardous waste programs in Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties, call the Tri-County Health Department.

## For more information, contact:

- Tri-County Health Department's **Household Chemical Information Hotline** at (303) 846-6249  
[www.tchd.org](http://www.tchd.org)
- Health & Safety Information On Household Products (NIH) at <http://hpd.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm>
- **Earth's 911: The Environmental Hotline** at 1-800-CLEANUP or [www.cleanup.org](http://www.cleanup.org)
- Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at 303-692-3320