What can YOU do about HHW?

Buy Wisely

1. **Buy only as much as you need** to avoid unwanted leftovers.
2. **Select the least toxic product** to do the job.

Other HHW Tips

1. Is the product still useable? **Give it away.** A friend, neighbor or community group may be able to use it.
2. If the product isn't useable or you can't give it away, take it to your community's **HHW collection program.**
3. Do you have used motor oil or used oil filters? Take them to a **used oil collection site.**
4. **Take spent lead acid batteries back to the place where you bought them.** State law requires dealers to accept old batteries when you buy new ones.
5. In areas where recycling programs exist, recycle empty, dry containers and aerosol cans.
6. **Call the Household Hazardous Waste Hotline at 1-800-346-4242** to see if there is a HHW collection program in your area and for additional information on household hazardous waste.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Tom Ridge, Governor James M. Seif, Secretary

This and related environmental information is available electronically via Internet. Access DEP through the Pennsylvania homepage at www.state.pa.us or directly at www.dep.state.pa.us (direct link Household Hazardous Waste).

For additional household hazardous waste information, please call the Household Hazardous Waste Hotline: 1-800-346-4242.

A web space dedicated to helping you learn how to protect and improve the environment. The site features the largest collection of environmental videos available on the Internet and is produced by the nonprofit Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania, with financial support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 800 334-3190.

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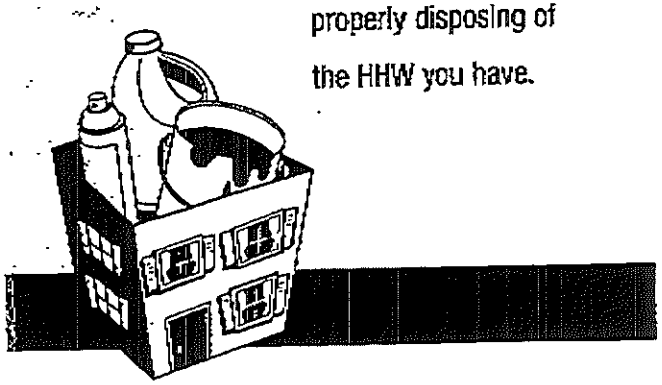
Household Hazardous Waste

What Can YOU Do About It?

Protect your environment by avoiding HHW generation and properly disposing of the HHW you have.



What is Household Hazardous Waste?

HHW includes old cleaning supplies under the sink, leftover wood stain in the basement and last summer's gasoline-oil mixture for the lawn mower. These and other products make up the estimated 25,000 tons of HHW generated annually in Pennsylvania.

If improperly disposed, HHW can create environmental and public health hazards. It may contaminate ground water, create air quality problems and harm wildlife.

How to Identify HHW

Generally, HHW belongs to one of the following hazardous waste categories:

Toxic–
Poisonous. May cause illness or even death if inhaled or swallowed. Old pesticides are toxic. Labels may have the skull and crossbones and usually state, "Danger/Poison" or "Warning–keep out of reach of children."

Corrosive–
Burns skin and organs. Many drain cleaners are corrosive. Labels usually state, "Corrosive–avoid contact with skin and eyes."

Flammable–
Examples include gasoline, fuel and oil-based paint. Labels usually say, "Extremely Flammable–keep away from any source of ignition" and "Highly flammable–keep away from flames."

Reactive–
React strongly with other chemicals and may cause fires or explosions. Chlorinated pool chemicals are reactive. Labels usually read, "Warning–strong oxidizer."

What Can You Do With Your Household Hazardous Waste?

Type of Waste	If you must get rid of it	Possible substitutes
Paint Related Products		
Oil-based paint, varnish and stain	Take it to an HHW collection. Donate it or save it for future use	Use latex products if possible.
Paint	Take it to an HHW collection. Donate it or save it for future use	Let pigments settle to bottom of jar and pour clear liquid back into original container for reuse.
Cleaning Supplies		
Ammonia cleaner	Small amounts may be poured down the drain with plenty of water. Take large amounts to an HHW collection.	Mix 1/4 cup vinegar with one quart of water. For stronger cleaner, use undiluted vinegar.
Oven cleaner	Intact containers may be put in garbage.	Put a baking sheet on the lowest rack to catch spills. Use baking soda paste and steel wool to scour oven.
Drain cleaner	Small amounts may be put down the drain with plenty of water. Large amounts should go to an HHW collection.	Pour 1/2 cup baking soda down drain. Follow with 1/2 cup vinegar. Let sit for a few minutes. Follow with boiling water.
Wood polish	Take it to an HHW collection.	Mix 1/2 cup vinegar or lemon juice with one cup vegetable or olive oil. Buff after rubbing on.
Yard and Garden		
Fertilizer	Small amounts may be disposed of with trash. Large amounts should go to an HHW collection.	Try compost. Compost is believed to keep insects and disease away from plants while acting as a mild fertilizer.
Insecticide	Take it to an HHW collection.	Try compost – see above
Weed killer	Take it to an HHW collection.	Cover with wood mulch or stone.

Warning – never mix chlorine bleach with ammonia or vinegar.

If a HHW collection is not available to you, call the Household Hazardous Waste Hotline at 1-800-346-4242 for advice on getting rid of HHW.