

SAFE MANAGEMENT OF HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

To avoid the potential risks associated with household hazardous wastes, it is important that people always monitor the use, storage, and disposal of products with potentially hazardous substances in their homes. Improper disposal of HHW can include pouring them down the drain, on the ground, into storm sewers, or in some cases putting them out with the regular trash.

The dangers of such disposal methods might not be immediately obvious, but improper disposal of these wastes can pollute the environment and pose a threat to human health. Certain types of HHW have the potential to cause physical injury to sanitation workers, contaminate septic tanks or wastewater treatment systems if poured down drains or toilets. They can also present hazards to children and pets if left around the house.

Some quick tips for the safe handling of household hazardous wastes include:

- Follow any instructions for use and storage provided on product labels carefully to prevent any accidents at home.
- Be sure to read product labels for disposal directions to reduce the risk of products exploding, igniting, leaking, mixing with other chemicals, or posing other hazards on the way to a disposal facility.
- Never store hazardous products in food containers; keep them in their original containers and never remove labels.
- When leftovers remain, never mix HHW with other products. Incompatible products might react, ignite, or explode, and contaminated HHW might become unrecyclable.
- Remember, even empty containers of HHW can pose hazards because of the residual chemicals that might remain, so handle them with care.
- Prior to disposal, pack HHW materials upright in a sturdy storage box. If containers are leaking, place in a leak-proof container with adsorbent material such as kitty litter, sawdust, or newspaper.
- Place packed HHW materials in a cool, dry, well-ventilated location where children or animals cannot reach until scheduled disposal.

