FACT SHEET: Household Hazardous Waste & Stormwater

Why is it important to carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals, and oils? Because these household products may be dangerous, and improper storage and disposal associated with household hazardous waste can be harmful to us and jeopardize our environment.

What is Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)?

HHWs are common, everyday products we use in our homes that can present a threat or unreasonable risk to people or the environment. These items can be corrosive, ignitable, toxic, or reactive, and when we no longer have a need for them, they become hazardous waste that must be disposed of properly.

Why is HHW a Concern?

When HHW is not correctly disposed, it can enter our storm sewers and waterways. Improperly disposing of these items into storm sewers, sanitary sewers, on-lot sewage systems, or by dumping them onto the ground allows stormwater runoff to pick them up and carry them into our waterways. Once this waste enters our waterways, it causes water pollution that poses a threat to our health and can harm – and in some instances kill – animal and plant life.

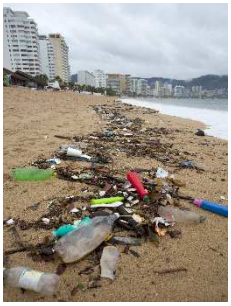
What Can You Do?

We need to do everything possible to protect and preserve the quality of our water. We can all make a difference by taking a few simple steps:

- Know what HHW is, and make sure to properly dispose of anything marked with the words "danger," "caution," "warning," or "toxic."
- Read labels and purchase nonhazardous options whenever possible.
- Create and use nonhazardous options whenever possible.
- Purchase only as much as you need, so that you do not need to dispose of excess materials.
- Never place toxic materials in your trash or dump them down sinks, storm drains, sanitary sewers, on-lot sewage, or on the ground; this is a dangerous and illegal practice.
- Check with your municipality and/or county for HHW drop-off locations and times.
- Help your municipality prevent dumping into storm sewers by volunteering to label stormwater drains.

Alternatives for an Eco-Friendly Environment

- Clean your windows with a vinegar and water mixture.
- Scour pots and pans with baking soda, salt, or borax.
- Clean the toilet bowl with flat cola, borax, or baking soda.
- Prevent clogged drains by using a baking soda and vinegar mixture.
- Use low- or no-phosphate detergents.



EXAMPLES OF HHW

- Used oil
- Antifreeze
- Bathroom/kitchen cleaners
- Bleach
- Paints
- Herbicides
- Pesticides
- Fertilizers
- Bug sprays
- Batteries
- Furniture polish

Check out your County's HHW disposal information:

- Lancaster County
- Dauphin County
- Chester County

WE CAN HELP!

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