

# Solid Waste Committee

## Safety Facts

**Here is some facts on Hazardous Wastes:**

### **Household Hazardous Wastes**

#### **What makes a product hazardous?**

**Flammable/combustible:** They can be easily set on fire.

**Explosive/reactive:** They can explode through exposure to heat, sudden shock, pressure or incompatible substances.

**Corrosive:** Chemical action can burn or destroy living tissues or other materials when brought in contact.

**Toxic:** Capable of causing injury or death through ingestion, inhalation or skin absorption. Some toxic substances cause cancer, genetic mutations and fetal harm.

Labels of hazardous products are required by Federal Law to list signal words. **DANGER** or **POISON** which indicate that the product is highly toxic, corrosive or extremely flammable. **WARNING** or **CAUTION** indicate that the product is moderately or slightly toxic.

Thousands of consumer products are hazardous but here are a few broken into categories:

**Automotive products**---Examples: gasoline motor oil, antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, car wax and cleaners, lead-acid batteries, brake fluid, transmission fluid.

**Home improvement products**---Examples: paint, varnish, stain, paint thinner, paint stripper, caulk, adhesives.

**Pesticides**---Examples: insecticides and insect repellent, weed killer, rat poison, pet spray and dip, flea collars, mothballs, disinfectant, wood preservative.

**Household cleaners**---Examples: furniture polish and wax, drain opener, oven cleaner, tub and tile cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, spot remover, bleach, ammonia.

**Other**---Examples: household batteries, cosmetics, pool chemicals, shoe polish, lighter fluid, prescription medicines, arts and crafts materials.

## **Cleaning up Hazardous product spills**

**These directions apply to liquid pesticides, paints, solvents and other household hazardous products.**

Remove children and pets from the area where the spill occurred.

Ventilate the area.

**Do not** attempt to use cleaning products to clean up the spill.

At a minimum, wear appropriate protective gloves for the product. Other safety equipment may be required for volatile solvents, pesticides or corrosive products.

Contain the spill in a small area by soaking it up with a non-flammable absorbent, such as clay-based kitty litter.

Put the contaminated absorbent into a non-corroding container. A plastic bucket with a tight-fitting lid is recommended.

Seal the container and label it with the product name, approximately amount of product, absorbent material used, date, and the word **DANGER** or **POISON**.

Contact local solid waste authorities for information on how to dispose of the contaminated material or save for a household hazardous waste collection.

After having absorbed the spill, thoroughly rinse the area several times with water and rags. Then wash the area carefully to remove remaining traces of the product. **Never** use household brooms or mops to clean the spill since they will become contaminated and must be discarded.

## **Storing Hazardous products safely**

Keep the products out of the reach of children and animals. Store all hazardous products away from food items in locked cabinets or in cabinets with childproof latches. Keep your poison control number posted by the phone in case of emergency.

**1-800-222-1222**

Make sure lids and caps are tightly sealed and childproof.

Make certain all products are clearly labeled before storing them.

Leave products in their original containers with the contents clearly identified on the labels. **Never** put hazardous products in food or beverage containers.

Keep products away from sources of heat, spark, flame or ignition such as pilot lights, switches and motors. This is especially important with flammable products and aerosol cans.

Store products containing volatile chemicals, or those that warn of vapors or fumes, in a well-ventilated area.

**Never** store rags contaminated with flammable solvents (such as wood stain, paint stripper and paint remover) because they can spontaneously start a fire. Follow the directions on the product label regarding the disposal of solvent-covered rags. If there are no directions, place the rags in an airtight, metal container and store the container outside your house away from other structures until it can be picked up with the trash. Another option is to allow the solvent to volatilize by hanging the contaminated rags outside, away from your home and sources of sparks.

Store gasoline only in safety-approved containers in a well-ventilated area away from all sources of heat, flame, or spark.

Store LP (liquid propane) gas tanks, such as those used with gas-fueled barbecue grills, outdoors and away from all sources of heat, flame, or spark.

Know where flammable materials are located in your home and how to extinguish them. Keep a working ABC-rated, or Multi-Purpose Dry Chemical, fire extinguisher in your home.

Keep containers dry to prevent corrosion. If a product container is beginning to corrode, place the entire container in a plastic bucket with a tight-fitting lid. Pack non-flammable absorbent, such as clay-based kitty litter, around the container. Clearly label the bucket with its contents and appropriate warnings.

### **Using Hazardous products safely**

Read all labels before using hazardous products, paying careful attention to proper use instructions and dangers.

Twice as much does not mean improved results.

**Do not** mix products unless instructed by label directions. Mixing products can cause explosive or chemical reactions. Even different brands of the same product may contain incompatible ingredients that may react when mixed together.

If pregnant, avoid toxic chemical exposure. Many toxic products have not been tested for their effects on unborn children.

During use, keep hazardous products out of the reach of small children. If the phone rings or you are called out of the room, close the product and take it with you or take the child with you. **Do not** leave products unattended or unsealed.

Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents or pesticides. They can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemical against your eyes.

**Do not** eat, drink or smoke while using hazardous products. Traces of hazardous chemicals can be carried from hand to mouth. Smoking can start a fire if the product is flammable.

Use products in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes. Try to keep lids closed as much as possible while working with hazardous products to minimize the fumes. Work outdoors whenever possible. When working indoors, open windows and use an exhaust fan. Position the fan to draw air away from the work area to the outdoors. Take plenty of fresh air breaks. If you feel dizzy or nauseous, tightly seal the product, go outside, and take a break.

Use protective gloves, goggles and respirators that are appropriate to the task if the product presents hazards to skin, eyes or lungs.

Cleanup after using hazardous products. Carefully seal products and properly refasten all caps.

## **Safer alternatives to Hazardous products**

### **All-purpose cleaner**

**Baking Soda.** Dissolve 4 Tablespoons baking soda in a 1 Quart warm water for a cleaning solution or use baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge. Baking soda will clean all kitchen and bathroom surfaces.

### **Drain cleaner**

**Prevention.** To avoid clogging drains, use a strainer to trap the food particles and hair, collect grease in cans rather than pouring it down the drain, and pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain weekly to melt fat that may be building up in the drain.

**Baking Soda and Vinegar.** Put 1/2 cup baking soda and then 1/2 cup white vinegar down your drain and cover the drain. Let set for a few minutes, then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain to flush it.

### **Furniture Polish**

**Olive oil and lemon juice.** Mix 2 parts oil and 1 part lemon juice. Apply and polish with a soft cloth.

### **Lime and mineral deposit remover**

**Vinegar.** Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked rags or paper towels. Leave rags or paper towels on for about 1 hour before cleaning. Cleans and shines chrome.

To remove deposits that may be clogging metal shower heads, combine 1/2 cup white vinegar and 1 quart of water. Completely submerge the shower head and boil for 15 minutes. If you have a plastic shower head, combine 1 pint white vinegar and 1 pint hot water. Completely submerge the shower head and soak for about 1 hour.

### **Metal cleaner/polish**

**Creame of tartar.** To remove stains and discoloration from aluminum cookware, fill cookware with hot water and add 2 Tablespoons creame of tartar to each quart of water. Bring solution to a boil and simmer ten minutes. Wash as usual and dry.

**Worcestershire sauce.** Clean and polish unlacquered brass to s shine with a soft cloth dampened with Worcestershire sauce.

**Toothpaste.** To clean tarnish off gold and silver (not silver plate), use a toothpaste and a soft toothbrush or cloth. Rinse with clean warm water and polish dry.