

# What is Household Hazardous Waste?

Household hazardous waste is any product labeled: toxic, poison, corrosive, flammable, combustible or irritant that is disposed of. A typical home can contain a vast array of household hazardous products used for cleaning, painting, beautifying, lubricating and disinfecting the house, yard, workshop and garage.

The chemical-based household products from a single home may seem insignificant; but, when millions of homes across Southern California use similar products, the combined effect of improper handling, storage and disposal becomes a major problem. The health and safety of people and animals, as well as the health of our communities and the environment is endangered when these types of products are discarded in household garbage, sinks or storm drains.

The following are examples of household hazardous products that may be found in and around your home:

<p><b><u>Lawn/Garden-Care Products</u></b></p> <p>Bug spray Fertilizer Pesticide/insecticide Fungicide Herbicide Weed killer</p>	<p><b><u>Paint and Paint-Related Products</u></b></p> <p>Latex/water-based paint Oil-based paint Turpentine paint stripper Rust remover Paint thinner Varnish</p>
<p><b><u>Automotive Fluids and Batteries</u></b></p> <p>Used motor oil and filters Gasoline and diesel fuel Auto body repair products Antifreeze Brake and transmission fluid Lead acid batteries</p>	<p><b><u>Beauty Products and Medicines</u></b></p> <p>Alcohol-based lotions Isopropyl alcohol Medicine Nail polish and nail polish remover Hair relaxers, dyes and permanents Products in aerosol cans</p>
<p><b><u>Household Cleaners</u></b></p> <p>Ammonia-based cleaners Oven and drain cleaners Floor care products Aerosol cleaners Metal polishes and cleaners Tub, tile and toilet bowl cleaners</p>	<p><b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b></p> <p>Televisions/Computer monitors Mercury thermometers Mercury batteries Photographic chemicals Lighter fluid Fiberglass epoxy Swimming pool chemicals</p>

## **Dangers of improper disposal**

When used, stored and disposed of according to label directions, most household products pose little hazard to people or to the environment. However, improper use, storage and disposal of household hazardous products can potentially harm our families and pets, pollute our neighborhoods and contaminate our environment.

When thrown in with regular trash, household hazardous waste can injure sanitation workers and may end up in landfills not intended or permitted for those types of wastes. When poured on the ground, household hazardous waste may seep into and contaminate our groundwater and/or the ocean.

When flushed down a toilet, sink or drain, household hazardous waste is transported through the sewage system to treatment plants that are not equipped to handle hazardous waste. At treatment plants, hazardous waste interferes with the biological treatment process and can contaminate the effluent that runs into the ocean and the biosolids that cannot then be reused as fertilizer.

When hazardous waste is thrown on the street, it goes down storm drains leading into our area waterways, impacting the Pacific Ocean and our local beaches.

## **How to Reduce Household Hazardous Waste**

One way to reduce the generation of household hazardous waste and prevent pollution from these dangerous products is to find non-hazardous or less hazardous alternative products. This will help protect the health of your family, neighbors and the environment.

When making your choices about the use of hazardous and non-hazardous products, remember that your decision can affect the way manufacturers design products. Before purchasing a product, read the label carefully to make sure it will do what you want it to do. Once you buy something you are responsible for disposing of it properly.

Buy just what you need to do the job and use it up. Give leftovers to a friend, neighbor, business or charity that can use them. Use products containing hazardous materials and fertilizers sparingly or use a non-hazardous/less hazardous alternative.

Select water-based products over solvent-based products when available (e.g., paint, glue, shoe polish). Avoid aerosol sprays. Choose pump spray or other alternatives.

Be smart when you apply pesticides or fertilizers. Read the label and do not apply more than is recommended. Do not overwater after application and do not apply before a rain - not only will you lose most of the pesticides or fertilizer through runoff, but you also will be harming the environment.

Have a professional change your motor oil. For a few dollars more, you not only save yourself time and energy, but it's more likely that the used motor oil collected will be recycled. Ask for re-refined motor oil for your vehicle. Re-refined oil is oil that has been recycled and then reprocessed so it is as good or better than virgin oil. By using re-refined motor oil, you are closing the loop and saving natural resources.

Dispose of household hazardous wastes according to the directions on the container, or at an authorized household hazardous waste collection facility or used motor oil recycling center. [Click HERE](#) for the closest household hazardous waste collection facility for Lemon Grove Residents. [Click HERE](#) for used oil collection centers. Or call 800-444-4244 for further information or to schedule a home pickup of your household hazardous waste.

Careful planning can help avoid the need for many potentially toxic products. Careful shopping will allow us to find products that can be recycled, reused or be disposed of safely. Careful planning and shopping lend themselves to source reduction – meaning reducing the amount of hazardous materials entering the household as well as reducing the toxicity of the waste generated.

## Household Hazardous Waste Do's and Don'ts

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think carefully before buying a product. Buy just enough to do the job.</li> <li>• Look for a non-hazardous or less hazardous substitute.</li> <li>• Read the label and follow directions carefully. Watch for signal words such as caution, warning, poison or danger.</li> <li>• Share unused products with others if each product is in its original container with a label.</li> <li>• Dispose of household hazardous waste properly by taking it to a collection facility or scheduling a home pickup.</li> <li>• Locate certified collection centers for used motor oil, antifreeze and batteries.</li> <li>• Completely finish products in containers before disposal. Clean, empty containers can be put in the trash.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not dump leftover products into the street, storm drains or ground.</li> <li>• Do not burn used or leftover products or product containers - burning may produce toxic fumes and contribute to air pollution.</li> <li>• Do not bury leftover products or containers in your yard or garden.</li> <li>• Do not put any household hazardous waste in the trash or sink.</li> <li>• Do not repack chemical products in containers that are normally used for food products or soft drinks.</li> <li>• Do not store corrosives, flammables and poisons together. Separate these containers.</li> <li>• Never mix household hazardous materials - dangerous reactions can occur.</li> </ul>