Household Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous *wastes* are produced when household hazardous *materials* are no longer wanted or needed as household products.

We use hazardous products every day in our homes. These products become a hazard when improper use or disposal will cause a threat to the environment or human health. Many common household products, such as paints, solvents, drain openers, oven cleaners, polishes, waxes, pesticides, cleaning agents and spent automotive products, have hazardous properties.

**How do You Identify Household Hazardous Products?**

To help you identify these hazardous products, federal law requires them to be labeled with warnings about their use, storage, and disposal. These labels include signal words to help you quickly identify hazardous products. The words “**Danger**” (most toxic), “**Warning**,” and “**Caution**” (least toxic) are used to help identify the various degrees of toxicity. These signal words, along with the properties that make the product hazardous, are listed to help you use these products safely. However, these requirements do not apply to most hobby products and typically do not inform you of long term health hazards. But, when provided, these labels provide valuable information that you can use to make informed choices about what products to buy and how to dispose of them if they become a waste.

**Why Should You be Concerned?**

The average household throws 15.5 pounds of hazardous materials into the trash each year. Household hazardous materials are disposed of in other ways, too. Certain products, such as used oil, are frequently poured down storm drains and many products end up going down the sink drain to septic systems or sewers.

**What About Waste?**

Every effort should be made to minimize the waste. If you cannot use the product up so there's no disposal, you might share what you cannot use with a friend or take it to a swap center if available. You may also be able to recycle the waste; most towns now accept used oil for recycling. Usable items, such as paint, may be donated to local service organizations.

**If you still can’t get rid of your wastes, don’t burn, bury, pour on ground, pour down drain, or discard them in the trash. Some of these activities may even violate federal, state or local** **regulations.** You should store these wastes safely and bring them to a local household hazardous waste collection.

For information on your town’s next collection day, call your town offices 447-3811, go on-line at http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/p2au/pps/hhwp/index.htm, or call (603) 271-2047 for more information.

**Additional Information**

For more information regarding household hazardous waste, please contact hhw@des.nh.gov or call (603) 271-2047. For information on our website, go to http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/p2au/pps/hhwp/index.htm.