

Managing Your Household Chemicals



Your Home Contains Hazardous Chemicals

Household products are potentially hazardous if they pose risks to people, animals or the environment. Many of the chemicals that are used in everyday activities can be poisonous when they enter aquatic systems (lakes, ponds, streams, or rivers) and can also contaminate area drinking water supplies. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the average household in America generates 20 pounds of hazardous household wastes annually. The typical home also stores 100 pounds of hazardous wastes.

Protect Yourself, Your Family, Your Community

You can prevent human health and environmental problems, and save some time and money by making wise choices in the purchase and use of hazardous household products.

At the Store:

- Read labels thoroughly.
- Select products with the least cautionary labeling.
- Seek the least hazardous products to accomplish the job.
- Choose products with environmental friendly packaging (i.e., recyclable symbols).
- Look for concentrates, which use less packaging.
- Purchase the smallest amounts needed.

At Home:

- Follow directions on products.
- Store cleaning chemicals safely in locked cabinets in the kitchen, garage and hobby areas, away from children, the sun, heat, and ignitable sources.
- Use products in well-ventilated areas.
- Store products only in original containers.
- Do not mix commercial chemicals.

- Keep fire extinguishers handy throughout your home. (Check with your fire department for recommended type.)
- Never pour chemicals down the sink or storm drain.

Make Your Own Non/Low Toxic Household Cleaners

By making your own cleaning products, you can: promote a healthy environment, reduce chemicals going to landfills or incinerators, save money, eliminate cluttered cabinets, and easily prepare the right amount of cleaner for any job. Visit http://nemo.uconn.edu/tools/publications/clean_waters/cwfact2.pdf to learn how to create your own non/low toxic household cleaners.

To learn more or report possible illegal discharges to the storm drain system, call the Village of Beecher at (708) 946-2261.

(Source: Clean Water Fact Sheet, produced by NEMO and Sea Grant Connecticut)