



Solid
Waste
Management
Coordinating
Board

Household Hazardous Waste

Prepared for 2009 Community POWER Grantees. Visit RethinkRecycling.com for more information on this and other waste related topics. This information has been approved by county staff and may be reproduced using the credit line below. Be sure to have your county staff contact review any changes made to this document before publishing.

This information has been provided by the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board through a Community POWER (Partners on Waste Education and Reduction) Grant. Visit RethinkRecycling.com your go-to-guide for waste and recycling in the Twin Cities.

Informational Article

Many common household products contain the same chemicals found in hazardous industrial waste. While the quantity of "household hazardous waste" generated by individual households may be small, there are more than 1.1 million households in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and the amount of hazardous waste adds up.

Examples of household hazardous wastes include acids, aerosol cans with product remaining, antifreeze, drain cleaner, driveway sealer, items that contain mercury (e.g., thermometers and thermostats), motor oil, oil filters, oven cleaner, paint and stains, paint thinner, paint stripper, pesticides, pool chemicals and wood preservatives.

Improper disposal of household hazardous waste, such as throwing it in the garbage or pouring it down the drain, could harm your family or garbage hauler. Improper disposal may also contaminate the air, water, and soil.

To address the household hazardous waste disposal issue, counties operate household hazardous waste collection sites where residents can safely dispose of household hazardous products, often free of charge.

How do you know if a product is hazardous? Read the product label. Certain words indicate the type of hazard posed by a product: flammable, combustible, corrosive or toxic. Other signal words indicate the degree of hazard: caution, warning, danger and poison.

Visit RethinkRecycling.com to find disposal options and more information on county household hazardous waste collection sites.



Statistics & Facts

- According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the average American home has accumulated as much as 100 pounds of household hazardous waste.
- In 2008, over 207,000 residents visited a household hazardous waste collection site in the Rethink Recycling metro area. Each participant dropped off an average of 80 pounds of hazardous waste and problem materials.
- According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, household hazardous products make up 30 percent of the substances most frequently involved in poisonings.

Clarifying Points

- County household hazardous collection sites cannot accept waste from businesses, including non-profit organizations, schools and home-based businesses.
- There are differences among the household hazardous waste programs in the six metropolitan counties. Each county manages information and disposal options for household hazardous waste somewhat differently. Contact the staff in your county to find out about resources and information available to you. Visit RethinkRecycling.com to find county contact information.
- Have your county staff review in advance any information about household hazardous waste or collection sites that you propose to use in presentations or handouts. Your county may require you to use a county publication about household hazardous waste instead of preparing your own for distribution.
- Due to important legal and safety concerns, you cannot organize your own collection event for household hazardous waste, offer a central drop-off location for household hazardous waste, or collect household hazardous waste from people's homes.



Resources

RethinkRecycling.com – Residents and businesses can learn how to create less waste, recycle more and properly dispose of hazardous items. RethinkRecycling.com is sponsored by the metro region's Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board (SWMCB), comprised of the six member counties, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

www.Reduce.org – Visit this website for tips to reduce the amount and toxicity of waste when you shop, work, and play. A website of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

County publications: Your county may have printed information available about its collection site(s). Please contact your county for more information.

HHW Images: Contact your POWER Grant Manager to request images to use for your HHW campaign.