

Questions and Answers about in-home use of *Hazardous Products*

Why should you be concerned about hazardous household products?

This handout is an introduction to hazardous products in the home. The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) wants to inform you about what you can do to minimize the amount of hazardous products in the home and the dangers accompanied with them.



WHICH PRODUCTS ARE HAZARDOUS? READ THE LABEL.

Read product labels and look for these signal words: **poison, danger, warning or caution.** These federally mandated words indicate the degree of immediate hazard posed by the product. **Poison** means that the product is highly toxic. Generally, **danger** indicates that a product is extremely hazardous, either because it is poisonous, extremely flammable or corrosive. **Warning or caution** indicates products that are somewhat less hazardous. Products listing no signal words are usually the least hazardous and those with poison are the most hazardous.

HEALTH PROBLEMS AND INJURIES

Accidental mixing of some hazardous products can produce dangerous vapors, explosions or fires.

Products containing acid or lye can burn skin, eyes or respiratory passages.

Exposure to some pesticides, paints and solvents can cause weakness, confusion, dizziness,

irritability, headaches, nausea, sweating, tremors and convulsions.

Repeated exposure to some chemicals can cause cancer or birth defects.

Hazardous materials placed in the garbage can seriously injure sanitation workers.

Toxicity is influenced by factors such as concentration and individual levels of sensitivity.

POISONING

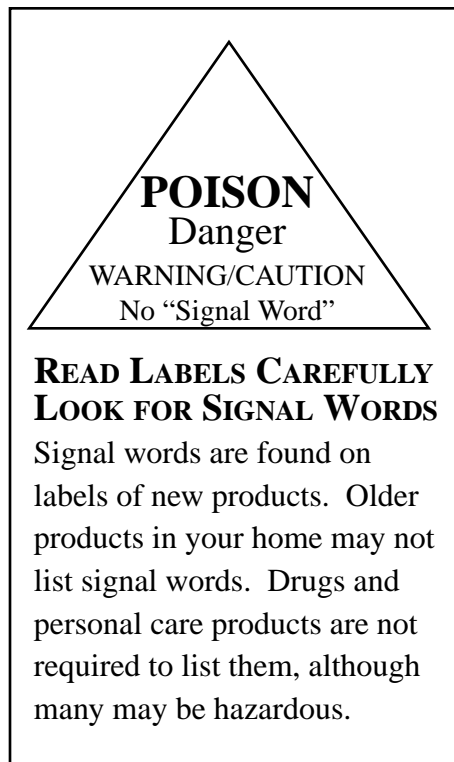
Toxic materials may look or taste appealing. Every day, children and pets become ill or die from eating or drinking toxic products in the home. If poisoning is suspected, call (800) 682-9211 for instructions.

INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Because we spend 80 to 90 percent of our time inside, indoor air pollution can have significant effects on our health. Indoor air can be two to five times more polluted than outside air as a result of the use of many household products. With some products, indoor air can become as much as 100 times more polluted.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

Pesticides can kill beneficial insects and birds, not just the insects intended. Fertilizers and pesticides can contaminate our drinking water, rivers and lakes when they run off farm fields, are buried, flushed down the drain or poured down storm drains.



For More Information Call (800) 238-1221

Center for Ecological Technology (CET)

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Commonly Asked Questions

WHERE CAN I TAKE MY USED MOTOR OIL?

The business that sold you motor oil is required to accept your used motor oil at no cost (save your receipts). Also, find out if your town accepts used motor oil at the recycling/transfer station.

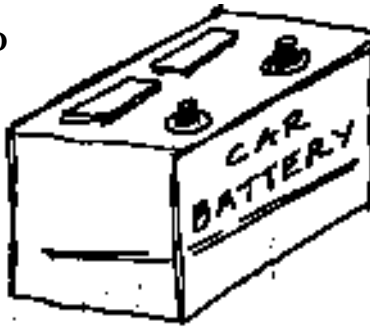


WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY LEFTOVER PAINT?

First, try to donate the unused portion to a non-profit organization or neighbor. Otherwise, oil-based paint should be saved for a Household Hazardous Waste collection day. Latex paint, if dried out, can be disposed of with your regular trash. Pour kitty litter into the paint can and keep the lid off until the paint dries out. Make sure children and/or animals cannot get into the paint can.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY OLD CAR BATTERY?

Battery acid, the liquid in car batteries, is a very dangerous and highly corrosive liquid. If you are buying a new battery, most businesses will take the old battery. If not, your local car repair station or town recycling/transfer station may accept it.



ARE THERE ALTERNATIVE CLEANING PRODUCTS AVAILABLE?

Yes, many non-toxic cleaning products are available in local stores. Also, recipes using baking soda, vinegar, water and lemon juice can create cleansers for bathrooms, kitchens, floors and more and cost less. Request a copy of *A Healthy Environment Starts at Home* booklet from CET for recipes.

WHAT IS A HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE (HHW) COLLECTION DAY?

Some communities/districts hold Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days to collect household hazardous wastes from residents. Materials are taken from your car, sorted and packed safely for proper disposal.

This handout was produced by CET through a grant from USDA Rural Development. CET is a non-profit organization active in the fields of energy/resource conservation and solid waste management.

For more information:

POISONS
EMERGENCY (Toll-free)
(800) 682-9211
Massachusetts Poison Information Center
(617) 232-2120
HAZARDOUS WASTE
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
(800) 343-3420
PESTICIDES
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
(617) 727-3020
REDUCING TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND MATERIALS IN YOUR BUSINESS
Office of Technical Assistance for Toxics Use Reduction
(617) 727-3260

Call CET's Toxic Awareness Hotline Number at (800) 238-1221 for:

- *A Healthy Environment Starts at Home* information booklet for explanations of safe disposal methods for hazardous products in the home and recipes for safer alternative products
- List of additional resources on household hazardous waste
- Information about your Town's recycling/household hazardous waste programs (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Counties)