

## What makes household hazardous waste *Hazardous*?

By definition, household hazardous waste is corrosive, flammable, toxic, or reactive. When you are purchasing household products, be sure to read the labels carefully and avoid items with any of these properties.



### Corrosive Substances

Corrosive substances will destroy or irreversibly damage other substances they come in contact with. They can damage eyes, skin, and tissue, with exposure resulting in chemical burns. Inhalation or ingestion can damage the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts.

#### Look at the Label

Words such as “causes severe burns on contact” or “can burn eyes, skin, throat” indicate a product is corrosive.



### Flammable Substances

Flammable substances can burn or ignite, causing fire. Solids, liquids, and gases can all be flammable. Flammable materials should never be used or stored near sources of heat, flame, sparks, static discharge, or in unventilated areas.

#### Look at the Label

Words such as “don’t use near heat or flame,” “combustible,” and “do not smoke near this product” indicate a product is flammable.



### Toxic Substances

Toxic substances are capable of causing injury or death through ingestion, inhalation, or absorption. Many household cleaning products are toxic. In fact, cleaning products were responsible for almost 10% of all toxic exposures reported to Poison Control Center in 2000.

#### Look at the Label

Words such as “harmful or fatal if swallowed” or “use only in well ventilated areas” indicate a product is toxic.



### Reactive Substances

Reactive substances can spontaneously ignite or create poisonous vapors when mixed with other products. They can also explode when exposed to heat, light, sudden shock, or pressure.

#### Look at the Label

Fortunately, with the exception of fireworks, most current consumer products are not reactive. The word reactive will likely appear on the label.

## The good news is, you already have safer alternatives in your house...

Two simple products—baking soda and vinegar—are safe and effective for countless household cleaning projects.



### Use Baking Soda as a:

- General household cleaner
- Laundry pre-treatment
- Perspiration spot remover
- Scouring powder
- Tub/tile cleaner (with vinegar)
- Car battery corrosion remover
- Grease fire extinguisher
- Porcelain cleaner
- Silver polish
- Dish detergent



### Use Vinegar as a:

- Chrome polish
- Decal remover
- Floor cleaner
- Pet odor remover
- Water softener
- Window cleaner
- Coffee pot stain remover
- Drain cleaner (with baking soda)
- Mildew remover (with salt)
- Paint brush softener
- Wood polish (3 parts olive oil, 1 part vinegar)

If you do have household hazardous waste to dispose of, please do so properly. For more information and a HHW collection schedule, visit [www.nashuarpc.org/hhw](http://www.nashuarpc.org/hhw).

## REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE ~ not just for household trash

We often hear the motto “reduce, reuse, recycle” in reference to household trash. However, we can also think about “reduce, reuse, recycle” as it applies to Household Hazardous Waste. Reducing the quantity of HHW you purchase and recycling what you cannot use conserves resources and energy that would otherwise be used to produce more HHW products. Reusing household hazardous products can save money and eliminate the need to purchase additional hazardous substances. Proper disposal of household hazardous waste prevents pollution that can harm human health and the environment.

Reduce  
Reduce



Reducing the amount of Household Hazardous Waste you generate starts with sound purchasing decisions. More often than not, earth friendly, non hazardous alternatives exist and are just as effective as their hazardous counterparts. A list of earth friendly alternatives appears on our website: [www.nashuarpc.org/hhw](http://www.nashuarpc.org/hhw).

If you do purchase a hazardous product, try to buy the smallest amount possible to meet your needs. When smaller quantities are not available, ask friends and family if they are in need of the same product. If so, purchase one large container jointly and share it, rather than having each household purchase its own. This not only reduces the quantity of household hazardous waste generated, but also saves you money.

Before you buy a new hazardous household product, check your shelf. According to the US EPA, the average household can accumulate 100 pounds of HHW in their basements, garages, and storage closets. Chances are you have the exact product or something similar already. If you don't, check with family and friends. And when you are finished with a product, offer it to others before disposing of it.

It is important to store hazardous products in their original containers to prevent accidents and ensure you know exactly what you are reusing. When reusing leftover products, never mix them with other substances. Incompatible products could react, ignite, or explode. Furthermore, contaminated HHW may not be able to be recycled.

Reuse  
Reuse



Recycle  
Recycle



Even if you have made every effort to reduce and reuse hazardous substances, inevitably many households find themselves with products that they need to dispose of. Household hazardous waste should never be disposed of in the trash, since it can pollute the environment and harm human health. Fortunately, you can properly dispose of HHW simply by attending a collection event. For a list of accepted materials and collection dates, visit [www.nashuarpc.org/hhw](http://www.nashuarpc.org/hhw).