

Household Hazardous Waste- What it is and Alternatives

Household hazardous wastes (HHW) are materials and chemicals that are toxic, flammable, corrosive, reactive, and explosive. HHW pertains to products used in the kitchen, bathroom, garage, workshop, garden and also on the lawn. Such products containing hazardous materials or chemicals typically cannot be safely recycled or disposed of without a special center or collection event. Unfortunately, such wastes are often disposed of improperly which can threaten our local water supply, health, and environment if discarded in the trash, dumped down the drain, or illegally dumped elsewhere. However, limiting to eliminating household hazardous waste is as easy as reducing the amounts we purchase as well as using safer alternatives.

Tips for purchasing and limiting use of hazardous products:

- **Read labels:** Make sure the product will do what you want it to do before purchasing. Follow directions closely for proper use, storage, and ventilation for such products.
- **Avoid excessive use:** Using excessive amounts of hazardous products does not mean the product will work better. Follow instructions for proper use.
- **Limit purchase:** Buy the smallest amount possible to limit excess and eventual waste. Aerosols contain larger quantities and nozzles easily clog. Instead buy pump sprays, creams, and paste instead.
- **Donate/Share:** Avoid disposal by contacting friends, neighbors, community groups, or charities who may be able to put products to good use and use product for intended purpose.
- **Recycle:** Products such as used motor oil, batteries, CFL bulbs may be recycled.
- **Dispose properly:** Take part in local collection events.
- **Use substitutes:** Many substitutes exist for commercial products. Using alternatives may require more effort or may not work quite as well or as quickly. However, by using less hazardous products you are helping to protect your health and the environment.

Alternatives to Everyday Household Products

Caution: Never mix products containing ammonia with chlorine bleach, toilet bowl cleaners, rust removers or oven cleaners. These products will produce poisonous gases when combined.

Household Materials

Safer Alternatives

Air Freshener/Deodorizer

Open a window, use exhaust fan, sprinkle baking soda in odor producing area ~or~ set vinegar out in an open dish. Place open containers of baking soda in closets, bathrooms, and refrigerators to absorb odors.

All-Purpose Cleaner	Vinegar or lemon juice diluted with water ~or~ 3 tablespoons baking soda in 4 cups water.
Ant Repellant	Wash countertops with equal parts vinegar and water ~or~ plant mint around your house ~or~ scatter coffee grounds or cinnamon around the outside or inside of house.
Aphid Control	Add ladybugs to your garden ~or~ mix few drops of dishwasher soap in 4 cups water and spray on plants.
Bleach	1 to 2 cups white vinegar added to final rinse cycle of laundry ~or~ 1 part hydrogen peroxide to 5 parts water and let clothes soak in solution, then rinse.
Carpet/Rug Cleaner	Half cup mild liquid dishwashing soap with 2 cups boiling water. Let cool. Mix with electric mixer until paste creates a stiff foam. Apply with damp sponge and rub gently. To rinse, add 1 cup white vinegar to 2 gallons of lukewarm water. Rinse and wipe carpet/rug.
Drain Cleaner	Pour ¼ cup baking soda down the drain, followed by ½ cup vinegar. Wait until bubbling stops, then flush with hot boiling water.
Flea & Tick Control	Feed brewer's yeast and garlic to pets ~or~ add 1 teaspoon vinegar to 4 cups water per 40 pounds pet weight and spray pet ~or~ bathe pet every 2-4 weeks in pet shampoos containing insect repellent herbs such as rosemary, rue, eucalyptus, and citronella.
Floor Cleaner	<p>For vinyl tile and linoleum: Mix 1/4 cup white vinegar, 1/4 cup baking soda, 1 gallon warm water.</p> <p>For painted or varnished floors: Mix 1 teaspoon washing soda and 1 gallon hot water. Rinse with clear water and dry immediately.</p> <p>For polyurethane-sealed wood floors: Mix 1/4 cup white vinegar in 1 gallon water. Dry immediately.</p>
Furniture Polish/Cleaner	<p>For polishing unvarnished wood: Polish with almond, walnut, or olive oil. Work oil in well and wipe off excess.</p> <p>For polishing varnished wood: Use mild vegetable oil.</p> <p>For polishing unvarnished surfaces: Mix 1 part lemon juice and 2 parts vegetable or olive oil.</p>

For cleaning varnished wood: Mix 1 teaspoon washing soda in 1 gallon hot water, rinse with clear water.

To remove water marks: Rub toothpaste on spot and polish with a soft cloth.

Glass Cleaner

1 teaspoon of vinegar or lemon juice in 4 cups of water. Spray on glass and use newspaper to wipe dry.

Insecticide

Mix 1 teaspoon dishwashing detergent and 1 cup vegetable oil. Add 1-1 ½ teaspoons of this mixture to 1 cup water and spray on plants.

Metal Polishes

Brass: Mix ½ teaspoon salt, ½ cup white vinegar with enough flour to make a paste. Apply thickly. Let stand for 15-30 minutes. Rinse well with water.

Copper: Polish with paste of lemon juice and salt.

Silver: Boil 3 minutes in 4 cups water containing 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1 teaspoon salt, and a piece of aluminum foil ~or~ scrub with a paste of equal parts baking soda, soap, and water ~or~ use non-gel toothpaste.

Mothballs

Use cedar chips, lavender flowers, rosemary, mint, ~or~ white peppercorns.

Mosquito/Insect Repellent

Mix 3 cups rubbing alcohol, 1 ½ cups red cedar wood shavings, ½ cup eucalyptus leaves. Let stand for 5 days. Strain and store liquid in spray bottle. Spray on skin as needed ~or~ use repellants made from similar ingredients.

Oven Cleaner

For immediate cleanup: Clean spills as soon as the oven cools using steel wool and baking soda.

For tough stains: Mix 2 tablespoons liquid dish soap and two teaspoons borax in two cups of warm water. Apply and let sit for 20 minutes, then scrub or make paste made with baking soda, salt and water.

To loosen grime: Place a shallow pan of water in heated oven.

Roach Control

Mix 1 part borax or boric acid, 1 part flour, 1 part sugar and set out in warm dark places. Repeat periodically ~or~ sprinkle diatomaceous earth in areas where insects crawl.

Spot Remover

Dissolve ¼ cup borax in 2 cups cold water, sponge it on spot and let it sit until it dries ~or~ soak fabric before washing in soap and cold water.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Sprinkle baking soda into toilet and scrub with toilet brush moistened with liquid Castile soap ~or~ mix ½ cup of borax and 1 gallon of hot water. Cool before using.

Tub & Tile Cleaner

Scrub with baking soda ~or~ scrub with vinegar ~or~ a combination of cream of tartar and 3% non-bleaching hydrogen peroxide.

***Note:** Most of the products mentioned in this brochure can be purchased at your local grocery store, drug store, greenhouse, or herb store. The products listed in this brochure are often safer for your health and the environment. However, some may still present hazards if not used properly. Before using these recipes on valuable objects, always test a small area first as you would with any commercial cleaner.*