

Household Hazardous Waste

Household Hazardous Waste is defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as “Leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients are considered to be household hazardous waste (HHW). Products, such as paints, cleaners, oils, batteries, and pesticides that contain potentially hazardous ingredients require special care when you dispose of them.” Examples include:



- Adhesives
- Latex and oil-based paints
- Paint thinners and strippers
- Grease and rust solvents
- Wood and metal cleaners
- Nail polish and removers
- Cosmetics
- Household polishes and cleaners
- Oven cleaners
- Drain openers
- Lighter fluids
- Fungicides and wood preservatives
- Insecticides, herbicides, and rat poisons
- Used oil and oil filters
- Fuel injection and carburetor cleaners
- Antifreeze
- Batteries
- Broken thermometers



Today, government regulations and testing protocols are in place for these products, but these do not fully address consumers who are able to purchase these chemicals right off of the store shelf with no training or education in how to use them. Any product labeled with “danger,” “poison,” “flammable,” “caution,” “warning,” “acid,” or “pesticide,” contains hazardous materials.

More than 900,000 Delawareans have the capacity to misuse hazardous products and dispose of them improperly creating environmental and health issues. The Christina River Watershed is negatively impacted when hazardous substances are disposed of improperly such as through storm drains, on the ground, down the sink or the toilet.

Consumers should rely on container labels to tell them about uses and precautions. Misuse or overuse of household hazardous wastes results in **water quality damage** and **human health and wildlife health issues**. Always, read the label and comply with instructions!

Hazardous Waste Routes To The Watershed:

1. Substances dumped in toilets or drains go directly into sanitary sewers or septic tanks.
 - a. The sanitary sewer system has a series of pipes that flow leads to a waste water treatment plant where it is filtered and treated. Not all substances are removed in treatment and therefore are returned to rivers and eventually to the ocean.
 - b. Septic tanks can fail when hazardous chemical overload the system allowing for contamination of groundwater.
2. Substances spread on the ground for weed control, or as nutrients for vegetation or for disposal may be carried directly to rivers, streams, creeks and groundwater.

Help Is At Hand:

1. DSWA operates Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Events at different locations throughout the year. Delaware residents can bring their HHW to the event free of charge.
2. For assistance in proper disposal of HHW, contact the Delaware Solid Waste Authority: http://www.dswa.com/programs_haz.asp.