



"DON'T EVEN BUY IT!"

Safe alternatives to household hazards...

Information provided by
the Androscoggin Valley
Council of Governments



HOME	ALTERNATIVES
air freshener	Clean sources of odor with baking soda. Use potpourri or vanilla in an open dish to cover odors.
disinfectant and mold inhibitor	Place 1 tsp. borax and 3 tbs. white vinegar in spray bottle. Dissolve borax by pouring 2 c. hot water over it. Shake. Spray onto mold-growing areas. Leave without rinsing. Vinegar will evaporate.
drain opener	Prevent clogs by pouring boiling water directly down the drain weekly. Use a plunger or snake to unplug drain. For stubborn clogs, put 1/2 c. baking soda followed by 1/2 c. white vinegar or lemon juice down drain and flush 15 minutes later with hot water.
furniture polish	Mix 1/2 teaspoon olive oil with 1/4 c. white vinegar or lemon juice in bowl. Dab soft rag into solution and dust, polish and shine wood furniture.
general purpose cleaner	Mix 1/4 c. borax, 1/4 c. white vinegar in 2 gallons of hot water. Stir to dissolve. Use mop or sponge to clean. Alternative products - Murphy's Oil Soap or CitraSolv.
metal cleaners	Use a dab of white toothpaste with water to make paste. Rub on metal with damp sponge. Rinse in hot water and buff dry with soft cloth.
oven cleaner	Sprinkle salt on spills while still warm. Scrub. Or mix 1 c. baking soda and 1 tablespoon salt with water to make a paste. Spread evenly over oven. Wait overnight. Soak steel wool in water and scrub. Alternative product - CitraSolv.
rug cleaner	Sprinkle baking soda on rug then vacuum. Use club soda on stains. Alternative product - Heavenly Horsetail All Purpose Cleaner or steam cleaning.
scouring powder	Mix 1 c. baking soda with 1/4 c. borax. Dampen sponge and scoop up mixture. Rub on surface. Let it set, then rinse well. Alternative product - Bon Ami.
smoke detector	Buy non-radioactive smoke detectors
spot remover	Clean spill quickly. Immediately use cold water for blood stains. Use club soda for fruit juice, tea, gravy, ketchup or mud; lemon juice for ink or perspiration; beaten egg whites for leather.
toilet bowl cleaner	Sprinkle 2-3 tablespoons cream of tartar on area. Scrub and rinse. Or use 1 c. borax and 1/4 c. vinegar or lemon juice poured into bowl. Let it set for a few hours, then scrub with brush. and flush.
window cleaner	Use 1/8 c. white vinegar in 1 cup warm water in a spray bottle. Dry with newspaper.
GARAGE	ALTERNATIVES
antifreeze	Use less toxic propylene glycol-based antifreeze.
household batteries	Buy rechargeable batteries and charger or use solar powered substitutes. Recycle chargeable batteries instead of discarding
oil-based paints	Use less toxic latex paint or solvent-free paint when possible.
paint stripper	Look for less toxic paint removers such as Citristrip. Sand and scrape paint.
paint thinner.	Let paint particles settle, then pour off clear liquid to reuse.
varnishes and stains	Look for less toxic water-based alternatives or use pure tung oil combined with pure linseed oil. Use shellac, which is a natural product made from insect secretions.
GARDEN	ALTERNATIVES
Bug sprays/ insecticides	For gardens, use companion planting. Plant disease resistant seeds. Pour a line of cream of tartar, red chili pepper, paprika or dried peppermint where ants are entering the house.
chemical fertilizers	Use compost, blood meal, fish meal or wood ashes. Plant cover crop in winter such as annual rye.
flea killer	Use a flea comb. Vacuum often. Wash pet's bedding. Give pet brewers yeast, garlic tablets or vitamin B as preventative measures.
insect repellent	Do not wear scented products outdoors. Burn citronella candies, punk, or incense. Alternative product - Bite Blocker.
moth balls	Use cedar chips or dried lavender sachets.
weed killer	Pull weeds. Mulch garden. Use intensive gardening techniques. Maintain a healthy lawn by adjusting the pH to 6.5, mowing high with a sharp blade, and watering deeply when the soil is too dry.

WHAT IS HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE?



The average American home contains about 10 gallons of hazardous materials. They are usually stored in bathrooms, kitchens, garages, and basements. Some are obvious, like old gasoline, paint thinner and pesticides. But many are not, such as polishes, glues, batteries, paints and cleaners. Some of these contain the same compounds regulated as hazardous waste for industry. They often contain a label with the wording CAUTION, WARNING or DANGER. *Follow label instructions!!*

The U.S. EPA and the Maine DEP define hazardous materials as **flammable** (can catch fire easily), **reactive** (can react or explode), **corrosive** (can corrode containers and other materials), or **toxic** (can poison humans, animals and plants) The substances we use on a daily basis can often have these characteristics. For example, the combination of bleach and ammonia can produce fatal gases. Swimming pool chemicals can cause explosions and fatal gases when improperly handled or mixed.

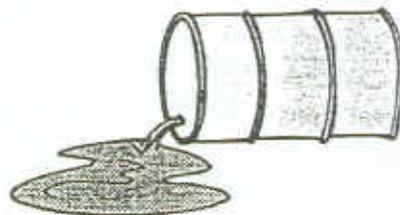
If people pour hazardous substances down the drain or toss them on the ground, they can make their way into our drinking, fishing and swimming waters, our soil and our air. They can contaminate lakes and streams even after "treatment" at a municipal sewage plant. When improperly thrown away, these wastes can injure solid waste workers. When trash containing hazardous waste is improperly incinerated, it can contaminate the air in our neighborhoods.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

Reduce HHW usage: The best way is to limit the amount of hazardous substances that you buy and throw away. Use a less hazardous product and give away what can be safely reused (see chart on back).

Store it safely: Materials that are too risky to use should be safely stored until there is a household hazardous waste collection in your area. Keep the product in its original container if possible. Don't store hazards in rusty containers or in open containers. Don't let these materials leak onto the ground or into floor drains. Never mix chemical products. Wrap the waste carefully according to label directions; place in double plastic bags and label the outside of the bag. Store away from heat, children and pets. Ignitable wastes should be stored away from habitations.

Clean-up spills: To stop liquid spills from reaching the ground or a floor drain, clay cat litter (with no chemical additives) may be used as an absorbent. Vermiculite, sawdust and other products designed specifically for use with chemicals may also be used as absorbents.



Dispose of safely: Encourage your town to participate in an HHW collection program. These collection days are opportunities to take hard-to-dispose of residential wastes to trained chemists. They will package and dispose of wastes according to federally approved standards. *Explosive wastes* require special handling. These include ammunition, picric acid, ether and concentrated hydrogen peroxide (household strength is not explosive). If you have any explosive wastes, contact your local police department for further information. Be sure to read the label for disposal directions. Product information and regulations may change over time, so use common sense.

