



ASSESSING YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

PROTECTING YOUR WATER QUALITY THROUGH A HOME & FARM ASSESSMENT



WHY SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

Most people are generally aware of the hazards of commonly used pesticides. However, you may be less aware of the hazards that household chemicals may pose to yourself and the environment.

Consider the variety of products commonly used in households and on farms: paints, solvents, oils, cleaners, wood preservatives, batteries, adhesives, and pesticides. Small amounts of common chemicals are often spilled, buried, dumped or flushed onto the ground or down the toilet. Some common, unsafe disposal practices may not only threaten your drinking water, but also may be illegal.

Proper use and disposal of household chemicals can reduce risks to both human health and water quality.

Your drinking water is least likely to be contaminated by hazardous chemicals if you use

products correctly and dispose of wastes at an approved disposal site. Proper disposal practices are essential to avoid contamination risks that could harm the water supplies and health of yourself and others.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Use this worksheet to address questions you have answered **Yes** to or **do not know** the answer to in the **Assessing Your Household Hazardous Waste Management Practices** section of your **Home and Farm Water Quality Assessment**. This worksheet will help you develop an Action Plan to establish practices that reduce the risks of contamination to your drinking water supply.

A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTARY POLLUTION PREVENTION

UVI Cooperative Extension Service

VI Resource Conservation and
Development Council, Inc.

USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service



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YES

NO

☐☐

1.

Do you dispose of household products such as furniture polish, paints, stains, and cleaners and/or their containers on your property (including down the drain)?

☐☐

2.

Do you dispose of used petroleum products, anti-freeze, or batteries on your property?

☐☐

3.

Do you dispose of leftover or banned pesticides and/or pesticide containers on your property?

☐☐

4.

Are any of these hazardous products stored near your cistern, well and/or pump room, or accessible to children and/or pets?

☐☐

5.

Has it been longer than one (1) year since you reviewed or updated your emergency response plan (emergency phone numbers, escape routes, poisoning information)?

If you have answered **Yes** or **do not know** the answer to any of these questions, refer to this factsheet for valuable information that will help you develop an Action Plan to reduce the risk of contamination to your drinking water supply and surrounding surface waters.

Some communities have household hazardous waste collection days. These are usually advertised. The Department of Planning and Natural Resources Division of Environmental Protection (DPNR-DEP) or Department of Public Works may have more information about household hazardous waste collections.



2. DO YOU DISPOSE OF USED PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, ANTIFREEZE, OR LEAD-ACID BATTERIES ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Do **not** dispose of these materials on your property. It is illegal to dispose of used petroleum products, antifreeze and lead-acid batteries on private or public property, or to dump these products onto the ground or into sewers or drainage channels. It is also illegal to dispose of hazardous waste in Virgin Islands' sanitary landfills. Businesses generating hazardous wastes must send these materials by an approved carrier to an EPA-approved facility for disposal.

Used oil contains toxic chemicals, cancer-causing hydrocarbons, and heavy metals (lead, zinc, arsenic, chromium, cadmium) that are harmful to public health and the environment. Dumping used oil in storm drains, guts and on the ground pollutes our surface and ground water supplies. Used oil in the garbage seeps through the landfill into ground water, ponds and mangrove lagoons, and the sea. Used oil has been classified as a “special waste” under Virgin Islands law in order for the Department of Public Works’ (DPW) to conduct it’s Used Oil Collection Program. DPW will accept used oil from the public in sealed containers in quantities of five (5) gallons or less at the following locations:

St. Croix: DPW facilities in Anna's Hope, 9-4 weekdays, 10-4 Saturdays, 12-4 Sundays.

St. John: DPW transfer station, Susannaberg, 8-5 weekdays, 8-12 weekends & holidays.

St. Thomas: DPW Motor Pool, Subbase, 9-4 weekdays.

DPW **WILL NOT** accept used oil mixed with anti-freeze, solvents, paint, paint thinner, carburetor, or parts cleaner. To find out how to dispose of these and other hazardous wastes, contact the DPW Division of Environmental Services or DPNR-DEP. Petroleum products and other chemicals should be properly stored until they can safely be disposed of. Proper storage includes a secured container on an impervious surface at least 150 feet from drinking water supplies and surface waters.

3. DO YOU DISPOSE OF LEFTOVER OR BANNED PESTICIDES AND/OR PESTICIDE CONTAINERS ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Pesticides and pesticide containers, including those used for yard care, gardens, and indoor plants, can contaminate drinking water if not properly used, stored and/or discarded. Keep all pesticides in a secured storage area or container with an impermeable surface (concrete, metal, heavy-duty plastic) at least 150 feet from your water supply system. Contact the V.I. Department of



Agriculture or DPNR Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) for details on proper storage and disposal of all pesticides. Special attention should be used when dealing with pesticides classified as "restricted use."

Old, unused and banned pesticides and their containers should not be disposed of on your property. They should be stored in a safe place until a collection site is organized for proper disposal. Contact your local DPNR-DEP, UVI Cooperative Extension Service (CES), or Department of Agriculture for more information.

4. ARE ANY OF THE HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED STORED NEAR OUR WATER SUPPLY AND/OR PUMP ROOM, AND/OR ACCESSIBLE TO CHILDREN AND PETS?

Each year, hundreds of children and pets are injured or poisoned because of improperly stored hazardous household products. All household hazardous products and wastes need to be secured until they can be used or properly discarded. Household hazardous products and wastes should be stored away from your water supply and pump room (preferably in a detached storage shed). Make sure materials are stored in an area with secondary containment (a concrete pad and curb or some other impermeable material) and that there is no access for children or animals. Educate your family on the dangers of these products and on emergency procedures in case of spills or poisonings. You may also want to start using less toxic household products. For more information, contact UVI-CES.



5. HAS IT BEEN LONGER THAN ONE YEAR SINCE YOU UPDATED YOUR EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (i.e. EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS, ESCAPE ROUTES, ETC.)?

All families should have an updated emergency response plan to handle hazardous material spills, chemical poisonings, and other emergencies. The plan should include: where hazardous products are stored, emergency response numbers, and finally, what to do in case of an accident. Contact DPNR-DEP, UVI-CES, or the Health Department to get more information on developing an emergency response plan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This assessment does not cover all potential risks on your property that could impact the quality of your drinking water. It is designed to: create an awareness of potential risks to water quality on your property; provide voluntary solutions to reduce pollution risks; and develop an action plan to protect your drinking water supply. Individual areas and states may vary in requirements on minimum standards for water supply protection. Always check with your local offices listed in the reference section of each worksheet before making changes to your water supply system. There are other, more detailed, Farm*A*Syst/Home*A*Syst programs available. If you have specific questions about protecting your drinking water, contact your local Extension Service Office, local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Office, or your local Soil and Water Conservation District Office. You may also contact the National Farm*A*Syst/Home*A*Syst Office at B142 Steenbock Library, 550 Babcock Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1293, Phone (608) 262-0024.

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If You Answered "Yes" to the Following Questions	What to Do	Who to Call	Other References	What You Did
Questions 1,2,3	Inventory all household hazardous waste, pesticides, and containers on your property.	UVI Cooperative Extension Service (CES), Department of Public Works (DPW), Department of Agriculture (DOA), or DPNR Division of Environmental Protection (DEP).		
Question 4	Develop a secured storage area.	UVI-CES, DPNR-DEP, DOA.		
Question 5	Develop an emergency response plan.	UVI-CES, DPNR-DEP, or Health Department.		

PHONE NUMBERS:

UVI-CES: 692-4080 (St. Croix); 693-1080 (St. Thomas - St. John)
 DPNR-DEP: 773-1082 (St. Croix); 774-3320 (St. Thomas - St. John)
 DOA: 778-0997 (St. Croix); 774-5182 (St. Thomas - St. John)
 Health Department: 773-1311 (St. Croix); 774-6880 (St. Thomas - St. John)
 DPW: 773-1290 (St. Croix); 776-4844 (St. Thomas)