

# HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous waste is not only created by industries, it also comes from us - from our homes, cars, and yards. Hazardous waste is any material that poses a risk to people or to the environment if it is not properly disposed.



When a toxic household product is discarded improperly it ends up in a landfill, septic tank, wastewater treatment plant, or gut, and eventually in our coastal waters. Septic tanks and wastewater treatment plants rely on a delicate balance of bacteria to decompose wastes. If this balance is disturbed by the introduction of a toxic household product, the septic tank or treatment plant may malfunction, sending untreated chemicals into guts, groundwater, and coastal waters. Surface and ground waters can be contaminated by direct dumping of hazardous wastes into guts or storm drains or by leaching of toxic chemicals from landfills into groundwater and coastal waters.

Your help is needed to keep toxic substances out of our coastal waters and groundwater. To help protect our waters, please read the suggestions below to ensure that your home is not a hazardous waste contributor.

## GENERAL TIPS

- Be aware of product uses and dangers.** Read product labels carefully and follow directions. If directions are unclear, contact the manufacturer or dealer before using.
- Keep unused products in their original containers** so that you can refer to the directions and list of contents in case of accidental poisoning. Always store products in a safe, dry place (this practice is mandatory for all pesticides).
- Never mix different or unknown chemicals together.** Some products form dangerous compounds when mixed together (such as bleach and ammonia). For products such as epoxy that require chemicals to be mixed; follow the directions carefully.
- Never pour harmful chemical products down the drain.** Many toxic substances harm septic systems, contaminate groundwater, and pass right through sewage treatment plants to contaminate our coastal waters.

- Try using alternative, non-toxic products.** Consult the list at the end of this brochure for ideas, contact the UVI Cooperative Extension Service for more information about alternatives, or check your local library or bookstore.

If you want to dispose of a product, but you aren't sure how, call an expert. Names and locations of experts nearest your home can be found in the information section at the end of this brochure. Urge your senators and the Department of Public Works to establish a household hazardous waste collection program for the Virgin Islands.

The following information is provided to help you to properly dispose of your hazardous wastes.

## HOUSEHOLD PESTICIDES

**Examples of products:** flea bombs, shampoos, and sprays; mouse/rat poisons; roach and ant killers; pool chemicals; and mildew removers.

**Examples of toxic chemicals in these products:** allethrin, brodifacoum, chlorpyrifos, deet, zinc phosphide.

**NOTE:** The toxicity of these products makes them effective but also makes them dangerous to children, pets, and ourselves. Use alternatives whenever possible. If you must use a household pesticide, follow the general tips in the beginning of this brochure.

### Try the following alternatives:



- To encourage mice to live elsewhere, put fresh mint sprigs in the area where mice have been found. For a more permanent solution, use traps.
- To combat fleas, comb your pet often and use citrus-based shampoos and sprays or insecticidal soaps and herbal flea collars. Flea collars and monthly flea drops also minimize pesticide use and concentrate it where needed. These products are available at most pet stores, health food stores or veterinarian offices.
- To eliminate roaches, keep kitchen and dining areas clean. Set out small bowls with a half-and-half mixture of baking soda and sugar to kill roaches and silverfish.
- For flies, try fly paper or a fly swatter.
- For mosquitos and no-see-ums, try citronella candles or oil.

Other alternative "recipes" can be found in the UVI-CES publication **"Recipes for a Non-Toxic Household."**

**The following pesticides are severely restricted in use in the United States or are banned from sale:**



|                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| aldicarb (e.g. Temik)          | lindane                    |
| azinphos-methyl (e.g. Guthion) | methomyl (e.g. Lannate)    |
| carbofuran (e.g. Furadan)      | oxamyl (e.g. Vydate)       |
| chlordan*<br>diazinon          | paraquat (e.g. Grammoxone) |
| esfenvalerate (e.g. Asana)     | permethrin (e.g. Ambush)   |
| fenamiphos (e.g. Nemacur)      | 2,4,5-T*<br>toxaphene*     |

\*Banned pesticides

**Do not use these products.** If you have a banned pesticide in your possession, call one of the agencies listed at the end of this brochure for disposal information.

For accepted pesticides, if any is left over in the original container after initial application, do one of the following:

- Use the remainder of the product according to all safety and storage precautions provided on the label. Make sure to use the correct dosage or dilution for the problem at hand.
- Find someone else who can use the remainder of the product.
- Store the product according to the storage precautions listed on the label.

## PAINT PRODUCTS & PRESERVATIVES



**Examples of products:** paints, lacquers, paint thinners and strippers, brush cleaners, wood preservatives, turpentine.

**Examples of toxic chemicals in these products:** toluene, lead (in old paint), methylchloride, pentachlorophenol, trichloroethane.

**NOTE:** Water-based paints and products that do not contain toxic chemicals are available. Use your "buying-power" to encourage the development of environmentally-sensitive products; buy them when available.

Before painting, consult the experts at a paint store to determine the healthiest and most environmentally-sensitive option to meet your needs and expectations.

Solvents, paint thinners, and wood preservatives are especially toxic. These products should never be dumped down the drain or flushed down the toilet.

- Let used turpentine or brush cleaner sit in a closed jar until paint particles settle out.
- Strain and reuse turpentine or thinner, wrap waste material in newspaper, and discard in the trash.
- Pour old paint onto, and stuff empty cans with, newspaper. Allow to dry thoroughly, then discard in trash. This will curb paint from entering ground water at the landfill.

## HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS

**Examples of products:** deodorizers, polishes, spot removers, drain openers, all-purpose cleaners.

**Examples of toxic chemicals in these products:** lye, petroleum distillates, naphthas, trichloroethane, phenols, dichlorobenzene.

**NOTE:** Many of these products are used for heavy duty cleaning. Using alternatives regularly can prevent the need to use harmful products.

### Try the following alternatives:

- For clogged drains, snake with a metal line, use a plunger, and/or pour two tablespoons baking soda into the drain, add 1/3 cup vinegar, and after 15 minutes, pour boiling water down the drain.
- A mixture of baking soda and vinegar can be used for most cleaning purposes. Rubbing alcohol can be used as a disinfectant.

Other alternative "recipes" can be found in the UVI-CES publication **"Recipes for a Non-Toxic Household."** Use biodegradable or liquid detergents instead. Biodegradable detergents are especially necessary when septic system grey water is used for irrigation.

## AUTOMOTIVE WASTES

### COOLANTS & OIL AND GASOLINE

**Toxic chemical in coolants:** ethylene glycol.  
**Examples of toxic chemicals in waste oil and gasoline:** Petroleum hydrocarbons and heavy metals like lead and zinc.

**NOTE:** Coolants are highly toxic. Pets and animals that drink sweet-tasting coolant from contaminated guts or drainage channels, or puddles on parking lots or by dumpsters may die.

Don't dump coolants or used motor oil down storm drains, toilets, or drains, onto ground or into guts. These products **MUST** go to a collection site for recycling; any other kind of disposal is illegal. To find out where to dispose of antifreeze and used motor oil, call DPNR or DPW.

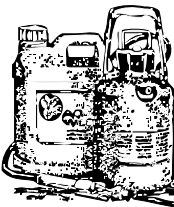
Keep your oil, antifreeze, and other automotive substances in a cool, dry place in separate containers; they cannot be accepted for recycling if they are mixed together. Do **NOT** store waste oil in plastic containers - plastic is made from oil and the oil will eventually seep through the plastic.

Proper disposal of fuels like gasoline and kerosene may be virtually impossible. Try the following:

1. Find a service station that will properly dispose of the product.
2. Call your local fire department to see if they can use the substance during controlled burning drills.
3. Store the product safely and call for information at one of the agencies listed at the end of this brochure.

**LAWN & GARDEN PESTICIDES**  
(fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, etc.)

**Examples of products:** grass and weed spray, rat poison, slug bait, insect spray.



**Examples of toxic chemicals in these products:** 2,4-D, captan, carbaryl, diazinon, malathion, methoxychlor.

**NOTE:** Although these products perform many services for the gardener, remember that they can be deadly to birds, insects, and especially to fish and other aquatic life. If you must use a weed or bug killer, contact the UVI Cooperative Extension Service to find out the most effective, least polluting product to use.

Consider alternatives to pesticide use whenever possible. Organic remedies may work well and at no cost to the environment. Organic gardening books are a useful source of information. Also contact the UVI Cooperative Extension

Service regarding integrated pest management (IPM) and sustainable agriculture practices.

Don't use pesticides if rain is forecast. Rain can wash poisons into a nearby gut or storm drain, where the pesticides are washed into salt ponds or coastal waters. Also, do not over-apply pesticides and do not overwater.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Department of Planning and Natural Resources**  
Division of Environmental Protection  
St. Thomas: (340) 774-3320  
St. Croix: (340) 773-0565

**Public Works Department**  
St. Thomas: (340) 776-4844  
St. Croix: (340) 773-1290

**UVI Cooperative Extension Service**  
St. Thomas: (340) 693-1080  
St. Croix: (340) 692-4080

**Virgin Islands Energy Office**  
St. Croix: (340) 772-2616

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
St. Thomas: (340) 714-2333  
General Information Hotline  
1-800-424-9436

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
Pesticides Hotline  
1-800-858-7378

**National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides**  
Washington, DC 20003  
(202) 543-5450

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*Printed on recycled paper with soy ink*

**SOME ALTERNATIVE HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS**

| <i><b>If You Have This...</b></i>              | <i><b>You May Not Need This...</b></i>                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vinegar and rubbing alcohol                    | Glass Cleaner                                                                                                                                                   |
| Rubbing alcohol, baking soda, salt, or vinegar | Disinfectant cleaner<br>Mildew stain remover<br>Toilet bowl cleaner                                                                                             |
| Cornstarch                                     | Laundry starch powder<br>Carpet and rug shampoo<br>Some stain removers                                                                                          |
| Baking soda                                    | Floor polish remover<br>Scouring powder<br>Tub and tile cleaner<br>Oven cleaner<br>Drain cleaner<br>Detergent booster<br>Silver polish<br>House hold detergents |
| Mineral oil                                    | Some household oils<br>Some rust preventative oils                                                                                                              |
| Soap and water                                 | Some jewelry cleaners<br>Plant insecticides<br>Plastic cleaners<br>Some stain removers<br>Stainless steel cleaner                                               |
| Vinegar                                        | Coffeepot cleaner<br>Some stain removers                                                                                                                        |

**\*Never mix ammonia and bleach, or get them near each other. The result is deadly chloramine gas.**

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**HOUSEHOLD  
HAZARDOUS  
WASTE**

***Simple Ways  
to Protect Our  
Coastal Waters***

