

Proper Disposal of Hazardous Items

There are many products used in and around our home, garage, boat, and car that may not look hazardous, but can harm humans or damage the environment if improperly used or disposed. Hazardous products are those that contain chemicals considered toxic to humans, aquatic life, wildlife, or have other harmful properties, like high flammability.

Automotive Fluids

Did you know that small amounts of car fluids (oils and coolant) and toxic chemicals can contaminate our drinking water and harm fish, turtles, birds, and all wildlife? Used motor oil is a hazardous waste because it contains heavy metals picked up from the engine during use. Fortunately, it is recyclable because it becomes dirty from use, rather than actually wearing out. Remember, since motor oil is toxic to humans, wildlife, and plants, it should be disposed of at a local recycling or disposal facility. Before disposal, used motor oil should be stored in a plastic or metal container with a secure lid, rather than being dumped in a landfill or down the drain.

Toxic Chemicals

Did you know that the improper handling, storage, and disposal of chemicals (e.g., pool cleaning chemicals) can lead to contaminated stormwater? Be aware that hazardous chemicals are used in many household products including certain cleaners, paints, paint strippers, thinners, stains, and varnishes.

Read product labels for safe use and disposal. Look for words on the labels like warning, caution, danger, and poison. Keep hazardous products in their original containers and never remove labels. When leftovers remain, never pour the products down the storm drain. Many hazardous household products can be recycled.

Sediments

Soil, sand, and minerals used in landscaping or construction can be washed from land into water; usually after rain. These materials can pile up in creeks, rivers, and lakes, destroying fish-nesting areas and clouding the water so that needed sunlight may reach aquatic plants. Careless landscaping, farming, and building activities will expose sediment materials, allowing them to be washed off the land after rainfalls.