

General categories of household hazardous waste (HHW)

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1) *Automotive products*

Examples: gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, car wax and cleaners, lead-acid batteries, brake fluid, transmission fluid

2) *Home improvement products*

Examples: paint, varnish, stain, paint thinner, paint stripper, caulk, adhesives

3) *Pesticides*

Examples: insecticide and insect repellent, weed killer, rat and mouse poison, pet spray and dip, flea collars, mothballs, disinfectant, wood preservative

4) *Household cleaners*

Examples: furniture polish and wax, drain opener, oven cleaner, tub and tile cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, spot remover, bleach, ammonia

5) *Other*

Examples: household batteries, cosmetics, pool chemicals, shoe polish, lighter fluid, prescription medicines, arts and crafts materials

Think before you buy

- Look for safer alternatives to hazardous products.
- Buy the least hazardous product. Let the signal words serve as a guide.
- Buy only as much of a hazardous product as you need to do the job at hand.
- Do not entirely rely on the word "nontoxic" on a product's label. A product that qualifies as nontoxic can still contain hazardous ingredients, but not in large enough amounts to cause an acute reaction. Chronic hazards often are not considered. Read the entire label for additional health warnings and use good judgment when choosing any product.
 - Read the label carefully. Hazardous product labels often list the principal hazards from using the product, such as "flammable," "causes burns to skin and eyes," or "vapor harmful." Make sure it is the product you want to buy and that you are not uncomfortable with the ingredients or the instructions. If label directions instruct you to "avoid breathing vapors" or "avoid skin contact," are you able and willing to follow these safety precautions? If accidental ingestion of the product can cause injury or death, can you safely keep it away from small children?
 - Buy hazardous products in childproof packaging.
 - Check to see if safety equipment is required when using this product. Make sure you have the proper equipment on hand or that you purchase it for use with the product.
 - Avoid aerosol products. Aerosol cans disperse the product in tiny droplets that can be deeply inhaled into the lungs and quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. In addition, aerosols can ignite easily and the cans may explode when subjected to high temperature or pressure.

SAFER ALTERNATIVES

All-purpose cleaner

- **Baking soda**
Dissolve 4 tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water for a cleaning solution or use baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge. Baking soda will clean all kitchen and bathroom surfaces.

Drain cleaner

- **Prevention**

To avoid clogging drains, use a strainer to trap food particles and hair, collect grease in cans rather than pouring it down the drain, and pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain weekly to melt fat that may be building up in the drain.

- **Baking soda and vinegar**

Put 1/2 cup baking soda and then 1/2 cup white vinegar down your drain and cover the drain. Let set for a few minutes, then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain to flush it.

Furniture polish

- **Olive oil and lemon juice**

Mix 2 parts oil and 1 part lemon juice. Apply and polish with a soft cloth.

Lime and mineral deposit remover

- **Vinegar**

Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked rags or paper towels. Leave rags or paper towels on for about 1 hour before cleaning. Cleans and shines chrome.

To remove deposits that may be clogging metal shower heads, combine 1/2 cup white vinegar and 1 quart water. Completely submerge the shower head and boil for 15 minutes. If you have a plastic shower head, combine 1 pint white vinegar and 1 pint hot water. Completely submerge the shower head and soak for about 1 hour.

Metal cleaner/polish

- **Cream of tartar**

To remove stains and discoloration from aluminum cookware, fill cookware with hot water and add 2 tablespoons cream of tartar to each quart of water. Bring solution to a boil and simmer ten minutes. Wash as usual and dry.

- **Worcestershire sauce**

Clean and polish unlacquered brass to a shine with a soft cloth dampened with Worcestershire sauce.

- **Toothpaste**

To clean tarnish off gold and silver (not silver plate), use toothpaste and a soft toothbrush or cloth. Rinse with clean warm water and polish dry.

Pests

- **Boric acid**

Boric acid will kill ants and roaches when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.

Spot remover

- **Club soda**

Rinse or sponge blood and chocolate stains immediately with club soda. Repeat as necessary. Wash as usual.

- **Cream of tartar and lemon juice**

To remove ink stains, put cream of tartar on the stain and squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over it. Rub into the stain for a minute, brush off the powder, and sponge with warm water or launder.