

Dealing with Household Hazardous Waste

Flood waters from Hurricane Sandy damaged many homes in New York State, especially along the coast. If your home was flooded, be aware that you may have chemical hazards in your home. Flood waters may have displaced or damaged containers of everyday items such as household cleaners, fertilizers and pesticides. People can be exposed to dangerous chemicals when cleaning flooded homes and disposing of these flood-damaged household items.

What is Household Hazardous Waste?

Common household products that contain hazardous materials become household hazardous waste when they are discarded. Typical products include paints, cleaners, oils, batteries and pesticides. These products contain potentially hazardous ingredients that require special care when you dispose of them.



How do I get rid of my Household Hazardous Waste?

Certain types of household hazardous waste have the potential to injure sanitation workers, contaminate septic tanks or wastewater treatment systems if poured down drains or toilets, and present hazards to children and pets if left around the house. Federal law allows disposal of household hazardous waste in the trash. Many communities have collection programs to reduce the potential harm posed by these chemicals.

READ THE PRODUCT LABELS

Read labels for disposal directions to reduce the risk of products exploding, igniting, leaking, mixing with other chemicals or posing other hazards on the way to a disposal facility. Empty containers of household hazardous waste can pose hazards because of the residual chemicals that might remain.

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What types of HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE might be in my home?

Household Cleaners

Ammonia-based cleaners; oven and drain cleaners; floor care products; aerosol cleaners; window cleaners; furniture polish; metal polishes and cleaners; tub, tile, toilet bowl cleaners

Paint & Related Products

Latex-, water- and oil-based paint; turpentine paint stripper, rust remover, paint thinner, varnish

Automotive Fluids & Batteries

Used motor oil and filters; gasoline and diesel fuel; kerosene; auto body repair products; windshield washer solution; antifreeze; brake and transmission fluid; lead acid batteries; metal polish with solvent

Lawn & Garden Care Products

Bug spray; fertilizer; pesticide/insecticide; fungicide; herbicide, weed killer

Beauty Products & Medicines

Alcohol-based lotions; isopropyl alcohol; medicine; nail polish and remover; hair relaxers; dyes and permanents; products in aerosol cans; sharps

Miscellaneous

Fluorescent lights; mercury thermometers; photographic chemicals; lighter fluids; shoe polish; fiberglass epoxy; swimming pool chemicals; moth balls; glue; mercury batteries

For more environmental information, contact:
EPA: George Zachos, Regional Public Liaison 1-888-283-7626
www.epa.gov/sandy

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8485.html>

For more health information please visit the following websites:
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/> or <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/chemicals.asp>

How do I protect my family and myself when cleaning?

- Be alert for leaking containers and reactive household chemicals, such as caustic drain cleaners and chlorine bleach.
- Keep children and pets away from household hazardous waste and spills until cleanup has been completed.
- Wear protective gear such as gloves, appropriate for the chemical being cleaned.
- Ventilate the area to be cleaned.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm, clean water.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent, and separate them from uncontaminated clothes and linens. For more information, see <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/planning/personalcleaningfacts.asp>.
- For spills, thoroughly rinse the area several times with water and rags. Never use household brooms or mops to clean the spills since they will become contaminated and must be discarded.
- Contact local authorities for large spills and further guidance.
- Always properly dispose of household hazardous waste.



For more information on protecting yourself during cleanup work, see <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/cleanup/facts.asp> and <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/cleanupwater.asp>.

What do I do if someone is hurt by chemicals?

Seek immediate medical attention if you become injured or ill.

If you suspect someone has been poisoned by a chemical, call 911 or the

National Poison Control Center at

1-800-222-1222.

If you suspect that a pet has been poisoned by a chemical, call the

Animal Poison Control Center toll-free at

1-888-426-4435.

What should I NOT do with my household hazardous waste?

- ✗ DO NOT mix household hazardous waste chemicals
- ✗ DO NOT pour chemicals down the drains, sewers or toilets
- ✗ DO NOT burn chemicals

Improper disposal of household hazardous waste can pollute the environment and pose a threat to people's health.