

Teachable Trash by Glad®

## Household Hazardous Waste Disposal: A Comprehensive Guide

If you're unfamiliar with what counts as household hazardous waste, you're certainly not alone. To get you up to speed, here's a guide that details everything you need to know about household hazardous waste disposal.



### What Counts as Household Hazardous Waste?



Household hazardous waste can take many forms. The [EPA](#) defines household hazardous waste as anything with one or more of these characteristics: toxicity (it's poisonous), ignitability (it's flammable), reactivity (it can explode), or corrosivity (it can rust/decompose).

Below, discover some common household products that are considered hazardous waste – but be sure to look up a complete list of household hazardous waste materials if you're unsure what does and doesn't qualify.

## Toxic

- Batteries
- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Electronics (e.g. laptop, cell phone, TV, printer)
- Mothballs
- Mercury-containing products (e.g. thermometer, thermostat)
- Pesticides and herbicides (e.g. fertilizer, rat poison, weed killers)

## Ignitable

- Charcoal
- Matches
- Candles
- Nail polish and nail polish remover
- Antifreeze
- Carpet cleaner

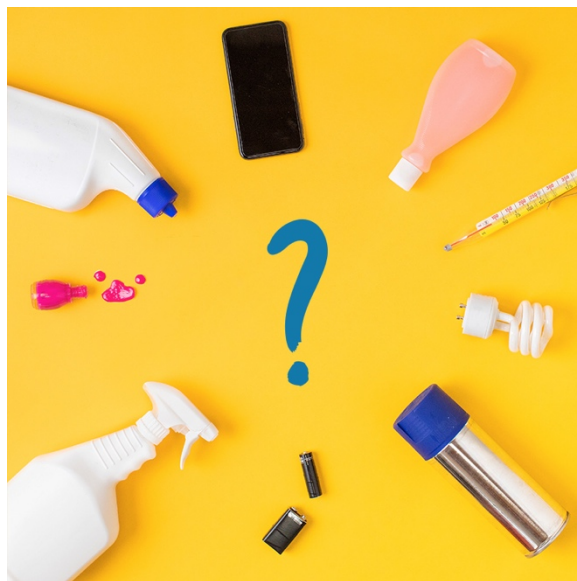
## Reactive

Aerosol cans (e.g. hair spray, deodorant, sunscreen, mosquito repellent)  
Silly string  
Pepper spray  
Butane refills/lighters  
Spray paint

## Corrosive

Bleach  
Drain cleaner  
Glass cleaner (with ammonia)  
Pool cleaner  
Hair dye (hydrogen peroxide-based)  
Bubbling denture cleaner

## Household Hazardous Waste Disposal: Do's and Don'ts



Once you're able to identify which products in your home are considered hazardous waste materials, the next step is learning how to properly – and safely – dispose of them when the time comes. Here are some do's and don'ts of household hazardous waste disposal.

### DO: Read Product Labels for Proper Disposal Instructions

Before getting rid of anything that may be considered household hazardous waste, read the product label for specific disposal instructions to avoid a potentially unsafe situation.

## DON'T: Pour Household Hazardous Waste Materials Down the Drain or Dump Them Outside

[According to the EPA](#), flushing hazardous waste down the drain or dumping it on the ground can pollute the environment, contaminate septic tanks/water treatment systems, and even pose a health hazard to sanitation workers.

## DO: Get Familiar with Your Local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Services and Regulations

If you need to toss some products that are considered household hazardous waste, the first step is to read up on the regulations and laws for household hazardous waste disposal in your area. Then, look up local household hazardous waste collection services, which can recycle or dispose of these products in a safe, environmentally friendly way. You can usually either drop it off yourself or arrange for them to pick up your household hazardous waste.

## DON'T: Throw Household Hazardous Waste Out with the Regular Trash

Not every product can be tossed in a trash can and sent to a landfill. In fact, according to the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, in some places it's even illegal to dispose of household hazardous waste in a regular trash bin. Learn to identify which products in your home require special handling when being disposed of, and follow the protocol for safely getting rid of them.

## How to Dispose of Household Cleaners

When you're considering how to dispose of household cleaners, you might be tempted to simply flush them down the drain with running water. However, [according to the EPA](#), that's really not a safe practice for you *or* the environment.

Rather than tossing half-used household cleaners, try to use them up completely in order to create less household hazardous waste. Another option is to donate any unused or partially used cleaning products to a local charity or organization that can make use of them. In the event that you have to throw out a household cleaning product that isn't empty, contact your local household hazardous waste collection service for a pick up or find a drop off location for hazardous materials in your area.

## Getting Rid of Flammable Household Items

In order to avoid the risk of starting a fire, it's important to know both how to store flammable household items as well as how to dispose of them safely. Make sure to

properly label any containers where you're storing flammable liquids with: the start date of accumulation, the type of liquid, and the Hazard Class 3 flammable logo. Do not mix any flammables when storing them, and keep them away from ignition sources like sparks from electrical tools/equipment, tobacco smoking, open flames, and hot surfaces.

As with other forms of household hazardous waste, the best practice for disposing of flammable household items is to have them collected by your local hazardous waste collection service or a private chemical waste removal company.

## Ways to Reduce Your Household Hazardous Waste

If you want to reduce the amount of household hazardous waste you produce, there are a few simple changes you can make to your lifestyle.

### 1. Make Your Own Natural Compost



Instead of using chemical fertilizer, the [EPA suggests](#) that you try making your own homemade, natural compost from things like fruit and vegetable peels, coffee grounds, and plant/grass clippings. Not only is it better for the environment than chemical fertilizer, but natural compost also enriches the soil, which helps it to retain moisture as well as ward off pests and diseases. If it's your first time composting, check out Glad's guide to [what you can and can't compost](#) to help you get started.

### 2. Ditch Oil-Based Paints



When you're paint shopping, opt for a formula that's water-based (latex) as opposed to oil-based. Water-based paints can be cleaned up with soap and water, unlike oil-based paints which require the use of paint thinner – AKA another form of household hazardous waste.

### 3. Take Preventative Measures Against Clogs



Whenever possible, use a plunger or a drain snake to get rid of clogs – and prevent them from happening as often by using a hair catcher in your bath and shower drains and by flushing drains with hot water a few times a month.

### 4. Learn What Products Are Good for the Environment



Familiarize yourself with products that are better for the environment using resources like the [EPA's Safer Choice](#) initiative, which aims to help consumers find products that are safer for human health and for the earth.