Managing Hazardous Waste in Your Home...

a guide to safe disposal and less-toxic alternatives

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Environmental Assistance Division
Spring 2003
MANAGING HAZARDOUS WASTE IN YOUR HOME:

READ THE LABEL
Avoid products labeled “danger” or “poison,” and closely follow instructions on proper use and safe storage of the product.

LOOK FOR NON-TOXIC ALTERNATIVES
Purchase the least toxic product available. In many cases, the least toxic and best product for the job can be made at home, saving you money. Check the shopping list in the back of this booklet for ideas.

STORE PROPERLY
Always store products in the original containers and protect the label. Children can easily mistake toxic items when stored in empty soft drink bottles, milk jugs, or glass jars. Always keep items out of reach of children and pets.

DON’T MIX
Some household products can form dangerous fumes or may become explosive when mixed. Always read product labels and use as directed.

USE IT ALL
The best disposal method is to use the entire product according to the directions on the label.

SHARE
Find a neighbor or friend who can use excess products or purchase the material with someone who can also use it.

RECYCLE/PROPER DISPOSAL
Whenever possible take products such as used motor oil, automobile batteries, antifreeze, and paint to a household hazardous waste collection center or collection event.

PLAN AHEAD
Think about how you are going to dispose of the product before you buy it. Also, evaluate if you really need the product to get the job done.

If you work on your home or car, or in your garden, or use store-bought household cleaning products, chances are you’re storing some hazardous materials.

Common household items such as cleaners, pesticides, solvents, thinners, motor oil, and paint can contaminate our air, soil, and water if disposed of improperly. This could cause harm to you, your family and pets, trash collectors, our community, and the environment.

Even small amounts of these wastes, when thrown out in the trash, can pollute ground or surface water. Products that are poured down the drain, onto the ground, or into storm drains can damage septic and sewer systems and pollute lakes and streams.

By following some general guidelines you can complete your household projects, while keeping your home and the environment safe. Use the following guidelines and the shopping list at the end of the booklet to take steps to a healthier home.

PLAN AHEAD
Think about how you are going to dispose of the product before you buy it. Also, evaluate if you really need the product to get the job done.

Managing Hazardous Waste in Your Home:
THINK SMALL
Buy only what you need so you have little or nothing to dispose of. When possible buy a multi-purpose product that can be used for several tasks.

in your area. Many of these wastes can be recycled. Refer to the back of this guide or contact the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for more information.

YES! Most of us have products in our homes that could be hazardous to the environment and our family’s health. Common products such as paints, paint thinners, pesticides, cleaners, motor oil and antifreeze are harmful if disposed of improperly.

INTRODUCTION
How to
Use this Booklet...

1. Become familiar with the commonly used products listed in this booklet so you are aware of potentially hazardous materials in your home and how to dispose of them properly.

2. Use this booklet to help you identify the least toxic product available for a task and to learn how to make products at home. Many of the alternatives included in this booklet are time-honored recipes. Try a few less-toxic options, and then share the information with a neighbor, friend, or relative.

3. See the back cover of this booklet for your local Solid Waste District and/or Town Clerk’s contact information.

4. Refer to the following symbols to guide you in proper disposal of household hazardous waste:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAFE DISPOSAL SYMBOL</th>
<th>WHAT IT MEANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use all products as directed or give away unused portion. Rinsed empty containers can be placed in the trash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bring any unused product to your local household hazardous waste facility or collection event. Please refer to the back of this booklet for contact information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lists some common, easy to make recipes.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lists some less toxic alternatives to common household hazardous products.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denotes special handling, use and/or disposal instructions.</td>
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# Recreational & Entertainment Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art/Hobby Supplies</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Use water-based inks, paints, adhesives, and non-toxic glues. Avoid items containing toxic pigments such as lead, chromium, cadmium, and phthalates. For children, choose crayons, grease pencils, water color paint and markers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charcoal Lighter Fluid</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Use an electric charcoal starter - lights briquettes in 15 minutes or less. Use a gas barbeque grill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insect Repellent (mosquitos)</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Use well-fitting screen doors and windows. Remove standing water, and other potential mosquito breeding areas like old tires, or trash. Use citronella oil as a repellent or burn citronella candles. Purchase insect repellants that do not contain “DEET” (chemical).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Photographic Chemicals
Use up or bring to a household hazardous waste collection center or collection event.

Pool and Spa Chemicals
Buy only what you need and store properly to prevent accidents or spills. Purchase a spa with an ozonator, which reduces your need for chemicals. There are several less-toxic water treatment chemicals available for both pools and spas. Check with your supplier for more information.

Propane Tanks
⚠ Exchange your empty propane tank for a full one at your local gas supply or tank exchange.

Electronics (computers/TVs)
⚠ Discarded electronics should be brought to your local electronics recycler. Contact your local Solid Waste District, Alliance, or town for management options.
## Automotive Products

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<tr>
<td>Antifreeze</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Have your antifreeze changed at a garage that recycles antifreeze. Use low-toxic (propylene glycol) or recycled antifreeze, which is safer for humans, pets and the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▼ Do not dump into sewer, storm drain, or onto the ground. Keep antifreeze away from children and pets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Batteries</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>To keep your battery working well, clean battery terminals with a paste of baking soda and water and check fluid levels regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▼ Trade in used battery when purchasing a new one or take to an auto parts or battery store for recycling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Paints and Primers</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Take car to a professional auto body shop for painting. Avoid using paints in aerosol spray cans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brake and Transmission Fluid</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Minimize use of fluids by maintaining vehicle and fixing leaks promptly.</td>
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<td><strong>AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Car Soaps, Waxes and Polishes</strong></th>
<th>Car washing - use small amount of phosphate-free liquid dish detergent and warm water. Wash car on lawn to help filter water through the ground, or take to a commercial car wash where the wastewater is collected for treatment. For interiors, use a weak solution of liquid soap or washing soda; rinse if needed.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engine Cleaners and Degreasers</strong></td>
<td>The practice of engine degreasing should be avoided. When necessary, apply product to a rag and properly dispose of dirty rags.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gasoline, Diesel, and Kerosene Fuel</strong></td>
<td>Store fuels in a tightly sealed container labeled with the fuel type (i.e. diesel, mixed gas, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="warning.png" alt="Warning" /> Dilute old gasoline with new gasoline using one part old gasoline to 5 parts new gasoline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motor Oil</strong></td>
<td>Purchase recycled (re-refined) motor oil if available. Have your oil changed at a service station or lube shop that recycles its oil and fluids. Do not dump into the sewer, stormdrain, or onto the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="warning.png" alt="Warning" /> Many auto parts stores and service stations will recycle for little or no charge. Call first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used Oil Filters</strong></td>
<td>Drain excess oil into a collection container and recycle the oil that is collected. Some Districts, Alliances and towns will accept used oil filters for recycling. Call first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="warning.png" alt="Warning" /> Check with your local service station for additional disposal options.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Paint & Finishing Products

Many paint products, paint removers and thinners, and adhesives contain solvents that are dangerous to humans, animals, and the environment. The key to reducing the amount of waste and the toxicity of these products is to purchase only what you truly need, look for water-based and least-toxic brands, and try to use one product for several projects. The less-toxic products often have less than 250 grams of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) per liter (note: one gallon container equals 3.79 liters).

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| Adhesives, Caulking Compounds, Glues, etc. | ![Symbol](image1) ![Symbol](image2) ![Symbol](image3) | Use waterborne or other low-VOC adhesives. Consider white or yellow glues.  
⚠️ Dried product can be placed in trash. |
| Chemical Paint and Varnish Stripper | ![Symbol](image1) ![Symbol](image2) ![Symbol](image3) | Use sandpaper, power sander, steel wool, scraper or a heat gun on the surface needing to be stripped. Avoid strippers that contain methylene chloride and trichloroethylene (TCE), benzene, xylene, 1,1,1 trichloroethane (TCA), or toluene.  
⚠️ Do not pour petroleum or solvent-based stripper down the drain. If lead paint is present, contact the Health Department at (802) 863-7231 prior to paint removal or treatment. |
<p>| Enamel and Oil-based Paint | <img src="image1" alt="Symbol" /> <img src="image2" alt="Symbol" /> <img src="image3" alt="Symbol" /> | Choose those products with low-VOC content. Latex and water-based paints are safer. Use natural earth pigment finishes as a less-toxic option. Buy only what you need |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Paint &amp; Finishing Products</th>
<th>Use the low-VOC brands (check with your local paint store). Buy only what you need and give unused paints to someone who can use them.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latex and Water-based Paint</td>
<td>Dried latex paint can be placed in trash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spray Paint</td>
<td>Do not use aerosols. Aerosol propellants contribute to air pollution and are dangerous to inhale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stains and Varnishes</td>
<td>Use water-based stains. Also, natural pigment finishes, such as tung oil and linseed oil work well. Use all products with caution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinners and Brush Cleaners</td>
<td>Avoid using oil-based paints and other products that require solvent or thinner for cleanup. Instead use latex or water-based paint. Clean brushes immediately after use. Soak brushes hardened with oil-based paint in hot vinegar. Cover brushes and rollers with plastic wrap to prevent paint from hardening between coats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Preservative and Sealer</td>
<td>Avoid products containing creosote or arsenic (CCA). Use naturally resistant wood types such as cedar or redwood or use water-based wood preservatives and sealers (available at most home improvement and hardware stores). Also, consider buying plastic lumber, a composite of recycled plastic and wood fibers. Plastic lumber comes in a variety of colors and is virtually maintenance free. CCA is currently being phased out of residential/light commercial uses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Miscellaneous Household & Personal Products

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerosol Spray Can Products</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Use similar products that are pump sprays or solids. For air fresheners, set out small dishes of baking soda, potpourri, simmer spices or herbs, or burn scented candles. Use baking soda to keep trash cans and refrigerator smelling fresh. Keep areas clean and open windows for ventilation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingernail Polish and Remover</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Minimize use of these products, and use what you buy. If you use these products, apply in a well-ventilated room as they contain a high level of solvents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Batteries</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Buy solar-powered devices to avoid using batteries. When possible, use rechargeable batteries instead of one-time use batteries. Many of these batteries can be recharged 100’s of times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alkaline/Carbon Zinc/Button Cells</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>✗ Contact your Solid Waste District, Alliance or town for any disposal restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NiCad/NiMH/Lithium/Small Lead-Acid</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>✗ NiCad/NiMH/Lithium/small lead-acid can be recycled through the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC). To find a local participating retailer call 1-800-8-BATTERY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime/Hard Water Removers</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>Use vinegar to soak off lime or hard water mineral deposits. Apply full strength to tile and let sit before rinsing. For build-up on faucets or showerheads, soak a paper towel and leave for about an hour...build-up should then wash away. To remove stickers, peel off, then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Instructions</td>
<td></td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Polish</td>
<td>Use a soft cloth to polish all metals to a shine. For chrome, wipe with vinegar. For brass, bronze, copper, and pewter, apply a paste of 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/2 C. white vinegar, and small amount of flour, let stand, then wipe clean OR use a paste of lemon juice and salt, rinse both with water. For silver, try toothpaste OR boiling silver for 3 minutes in a quart of water containing 1 tsp. baking soda, 1 tsp. salt, and a piece of aluminum foil, OR rub with paste of baking soda and water. For stainless steel, wipe with white or cider vinegar. Dried product can be thrown in trash.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pet Products</td>
<td>Preventative flea control: vacuum house frequently and keep pet and bedding clean. For your pet, try sprinkling brewer’s yeast on their food daily OR apply natural flea repellents such as eucalyptus or citronella to your pet’s fur OR try herbal flea collars (available in health food stores) OR a flea comb (dropping fleas in soapy water). Check with your veterinarian for other options. If necessary, pyrethrum-based flea products are reported to be the least-toxic of commonly used products.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometers</td>
<td>Purchase a non-mercury alternative (digital or alcohol).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If broken, use a piece of cardboard or hard plastic to push mercury droplets into a zipper lock bag. Contact the Environmental Assistance Division at 802-241-3472 for drop-off information for all mercury thermometers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermostats</td>
<td>Purchase a non-mercury, programmable thermostat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mercury thermostats can be dropped off at your local plumbing and heating wholesaler. Call 802-241-3472 for the nearest participating wholesaler.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluorescent Lamps</td>
<td>HID lamps, full-size and compact fluorescents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MISCELLANEOUS HOUSEHOLD & PERSONAL PRODUCTS**
Lawn & Garden Products

Identify insect pests before you try to control them. Capture a sample of the bug and the damage it is causing in a container and bring to a local nursery, or contact the University of Vermont State Extension Office at 802-656-2990 for more information. Below you will find some general suggestions for dealing with pests and taking care of your yard and garden. See back of booklet for additional resources and more information on how to determine the toxicity of products.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ant Killers</td>
<td>![Safe Disposal Symbol]</td>
<td><strong>Indoors</strong>: Clean up food crumbs, keep food areas, trash and recycling containers clean, and caulk openings where ants may enter the house. As a temporary solution, wipe up ant trails with soapy water then apply cayenne pepper, damp coffee grounds, straight lemon juice, or salt where they enter. As a last resort, dust boric acid at outdoor entrances or mix with sweet jelly or greasy peanut butter as bait (depends on ant species). This is a poison, so protect area from children and pets. Boric acid may also prevent future plant growth, so use carefully. <strong>Outdoors</strong>: Ants nest outdoors and enter homes only to look for food. Ants are beneficial for controlling pest insects, weed seeds, and improving soil through nest building. No control is needed, unless ant nests are in a highly used area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Fertilizers</td>
<td>![Safe Disposal Symbol]</td>
<td>For both yard and garden, start a backyard compost pile or set up a vermicompost (worm compost) bin. Use the compost as a primary soil amendment, adding other organic material as needed like bone meal, kelp, fish emulsion, alfalfa or soybean meal. Composting at home reduces the amount of yard and kitchen waste you need to throw away. Contact the Vermont Waste Management Division’s composting program at 1-800-932-7100 for more information. As last resort, dispose in garbage if it does not contain pesticides or weed killers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clothes Moths and Silverfish</strong></td>
<td>Clean clothes before storing for winter and store in well-sealed containers. Use cedar chips or blocks to deter moths. To get rid of moths, hang clothes in sunlight and beat them to dislodge moth larvae. Also, trap moths and silverfish in a mixture of 1:2 parts molasses to vinegar placed near the problem area.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Herbicides</strong></td>
<td>Minimize soil disturbances as this triggers dormant weed seeds. Keep grass cut to 2 1/2” to 3”, mow weekly to encourage dense growth, and leave clippings on the lawn. This also helps to reduce water needs and serves as a fertilizer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insecticides</strong></td>
<td>Keep garden and yard clean and weed free, remove plant debris and wood. For small infestations, hand pick or spray off with a forceful spray of water. If possible import lacewings as a predator. Use the least toxic pesticide when control is warranted - seek assistance at your local nursery. Options include Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) sprays for caterpillars, and insecticidal soap and horticultural oil sprays for other pests. For information on “beneficial insects” and “friendly pesticides,” call the University of Vermont State Extension Office at 802-656-2990.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rat/Mouse Poison</strong></td>
<td>Remove all sources of food, trash, debris, and mow lawns regularly. Close openings where rodents enter the home. If needed, set baited traps following manufacturers instructions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slugs</strong></td>
<td>Slugs breed in shady, cool, and moist spots in the garden, and are attracted to areas that are constantly moist. Keep mulch away from susceptible plants, and water the root areas rather than the leaves. Hand pick small infestations. To trap slugs, fill a shallow pan with stale beer and sink in the soil with rim at ground level. The yeast in the beer attracts them. Clean container regularly. To keep slugs out of raised planting beds, mount copper stripping (2” or higher) around the bed. They will not cross the copper. Or try sprinkling diatomaceous earth around infested plants, reapplying after watering or rain.</td>
<td></td>
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# Household Cleaning Products

Many common household items that you probably already have in your home can be used to safely clean your entire house. Items such as baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, mineral oil, and liquid dish washing soap along with a few inexpensive items found at your local market like borax powder and washing soda can take care of most of your cleaning needs.

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<tr>
<td>Abrasive Cleaners/ Scouring Powders</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Baking soda or borax cleanser can be used safely with a damp sponge. Wipe with vinegar to remove soap film. Mix 1/4 C. baking soda with a small amount of vegetable oil-based liquid soap to make a scouring paste. Use a scrub brush for tougher spots. Use vinegar to soak off hard water and mineral deposits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-Purpose Cleaner</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Use any of the following with a damp sponge as a kitchen or bath cleaner. Mix 4 Tbs. baking soda in 1 quart of warm water, OR 1/8 C. washing soda, 1Tbs. liquid soap, 1/4 C. vinegar in 2 gallons hot water, OR 1 quart warm water, 1 tsp. liquid soap, and 1 tsp. borax. Rinse all with water. Reduce amounts for smaller cleaning jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleach-based Cleaners</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Add 1/2 C. white vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice or borax to whiten and deodorize laundry. Use dry bleach, borax, or baking soda to deodorize and disinfect in general household cleaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Vacuum regularly. Deodorize: Sprinkle baking soda, or 1 C. borax and 2 C. cornmeal (let stand one hour/vacuum). Shampoo: clean spills immediately with club soda or soap-based rug shampoo. Other options: mix 1 quart white vinegar with 3 quarts boiling water (apply to nap of rug), OR mix 1/2 C. mild liquid dishwashing detergent with 1 pint boiling water - allow to cool into a jelly and whip until stiff (apply and rub gently - wipe clean).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Stain Remover</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Absorb as much of the stain as possible before treating. For fresh stains, apply baking soda generously to the stain OR use 1/4 C. vinegar with 1/4 C. of water. For older stains, try 1/4 C. borax mixed with 2C. cold water - sponge on stain, let dry, and rinse with water. Vinegar or</td>
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## Household Cleaning Products

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## Drain Openers and Cleaners

To open drains, try plunger first, then pour 1/2 C. baking soda followed by 1/2 C. vinegar down drain, cover, then flush with 2 quarts boiling water. Repeat. If necessary, rent or buy a plumber’s snake. To avoid clogs, use a strainer on all drains and pour boiling water down drain weekly.

## Floor Cleaners

For ceramic, brick, stone, and linoleum, mix 1 C. vinegar with 1 gallon hot water, apply with a mop. For linoleum, 1/4 C. liquid soap, 1/4 C. lemon juice, and 2 gallons hot water OR use 1/4 C. white vinegar in 1/2 gallon water. For wood floors, use 1/8 C. vegetable oil-based liquid soap in 1 gallon of water (apply with mop) OR mix in a spray bottle a splash of vinegar in warm water. Spray and mop with terry cloth mop or cotton towel.

## Furniture and Floor Polish

Try applying one of these combinations with a soft cloth. For wood only, mix two parts olive oil or mineral oil to one part lemon juice. Rub in toothpaste or walnut meat to treat water spots. For leather, mix 1/4 C. olive oil and a few drops of lemon oil. For vinyl, mix 1/4 C. vinegar, 1/4 tsp. vegetable oil-based liquid soap, and water. For unfinished wood floors, use small amounts of mineral or vegetable oils, or vegetable oil-based liquid soap mixed with water.

## Glass and Window Cleaner

Mix any one of the following combinations. With a lint-free cloth or rag apply a mixture of 1/4 to 1/2 C. vinegar to 1 quart warm water, OR 1 Tbs. of lemon juice in 1 quart of water, OR 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. liquid soap, 3 Tbs. vinegar, in 2 C. water. Dry with newspaper.

## Laundry Products

Use detergents that are phosphate-free and biodegradable. Use non-chlorine dry bleach, borax or baking soda to whiten clothes. For non-greasy spots, rinse immediately with cold water, then rub in a paste of dry bleach, borax, or baking soda mixed with water prior to laundering. Club soda or rubbing alcohol can be used to treat blood and wine stains. For grease, apply paste of cornstarch or baking soda and water. Brush off when dry. For ink, soak garment in milk or use hydrogen peroxide.

## Oven Cleaner

Clean regularly with a mixture of baking soda and warm water. Use steel wool or a bread knife to clean large food deposits. Pour lots of salt on fresh spills, let oven cool and then clean. To minimize cleanups, place aluminum foil on the bottom of the oven. Note: A clean oven operates more efficiently. Many of the new self-cleaning ovens should not be cleaned with any of these.
More Resources...

In looking to reduce hazardous waste in the home, it is important to first remember to use up what you already have and then properly dispose of any remaining product. In the future, look for less toxic products, make a product at home, or evaluate whether you really need another product to get the job done. Following is a list of resources to help you make the most-informed decisions to protect your home, your health and the environment.

Products with one or more of the following signal words on the label are considered household hazardous waste (HHW). Below is a summary of these signal words and their relative toxicity. Always try to purchase the items with the lowest toxicity (caution).

Warning labels on toxic chemicals required by the U.S. Government, Environmental Protection Agency, and Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances now include one of the following:

**DANGER** – Harmful or Fatal if Swallowed. A single taste to a teaspoon can be fatal to an adult!

**WARNING** – Harmful if Swallowed. A teaspoon to an ounce can be fatal to an adult!

**CAUTION** – Harmful if Swallowed. An ounce to a pint can be fatal to an adult!

**GENERAL GUIDELINES AND SHOPPING LIST**

By following a few simple guidelines when shopping for household products, you can considerably limit the amount of hazardous materials in your home. Take the following shopping list with you when you go to purchase products, and you’ll see how easy it is to provide a safer and cleaner home for you and your family.

with painting and clean-up jobs. Remember, many paint products contain solvents, so it is always important to use them in a well-ventilated area, away from children and pets, and to wear protective gloves and eyewear.

**Shopping List:**
- Heat gun, paint scraper, sand paper (electric sander), electric steamer (instead of solvents or strippers). These items can often be rented or borrowed.
- Insect/weather-resistant cedar, redwood, or composite lumber made from recycled plastic and wood scraps.
- Latex and water-based paint (available for indoors and outdoors).
- Natural finishes such as tung or linseed oil.
- Whitewash (made from limestone powder) – best for indoor wood finishing.

**AUTOMOTIVE CARE**

Many of the items you use to clean your home can also clean your car. Remember, homemade solutions are often less expensive and safer for you and your car.

**Shopping List:**
HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS
General reminders:
• Purchase cleaning products that are phosphate-free and biodegradable. Such products include laundry and dishwashing detergent and cleansers.
• Several companies now produce low- or non-toxic household cleaning products; look for them in your local grocery store or supermarket. If you don’t see them ask the clerk to keep these items in stock. More options will be available at natural food stores.
• Consider buying one product for multiple cleaning tasks. Citrus and vegetable-oil-based cleaners often come in concentrate form and can be used to clean floors, bathrooms, and kitchen surfaces.

Shopping List:
(all of these items can be found in your local grocery store or supermarket and can be used both in the home and outside)
• Baking soda
• Biodegradable and vegetable-based liquid soap
• Club soda
• Corn starch
• Dry bleach (powdered non-chlorine)
• Lemon/Lemon juice (concentrate works fine)
• Mineral oil (linseed oil)
• Salt (table salt)
• Spices (e.g., cinnamon and cloves) – used as air fresheners
• Vinegar

PAINT PRODUCTS
Many of the items listed above, plus these additional items will assist you
• Citrus-based hand cleaners – available at most auto parts and general merchandise stores.
• Citrus-based degreasers or “waterless” auto mechanic’s hand cleaner.
• Low-toxic or recycled antifreeze.

LAWN/GARDEN CARE
There are several local resources available to check on the best approach for treating your particular pest or yard and garden problem. The following list will get you started.

Shopping List:
• Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) sprays (biological control for pests)
• Beer (slug removal)
• Bonemeal, kelp, fish emulsion, alfalfa, or soybean meal
• Boric acid (crawling insects)
• Citronella oil and candles
• Copper stripping (keep slugs out of gardens)
• Diatomaceous earth (useful in eliminating crawling insects if applied dry as needed at point of entry)
• Honey (no-pest strip)
• Horticultural oil and insecticidal soap sprays (insect control directly on plants)
• Pyrethrum-based products (use to control insects derived from Chrysanthemum extract)

The Vermont DEC thanks Denver Recycles for the use and adaptation of its Guide to Household Hazardous Waste Management.
ONLINE RESOURCES:

The following list of online resources does not represent or imply endorsement or certification by the State of Vermont. The State of Vermont makes no representations, express or implied, as to the accuracy, currency or completeness of the information. The material presented on this site is for general information purposes only. The material is provided solely on the basis that users will take responsibility for verifying the accuracy, currency and completeness of all relevant representations, statements and information.

- www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/hhw/index.htm
  Household hazardous waste management information from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

- www.car2e.com/channels/lifestyle/home#55
  Non-toxic household cleaning recipes, tips and resources.

- www.ecomall.com/greenshopping/amy.htm
  Information on how to determine a product is hazardous, non-toxic tips and online question and answer service dealing with toxics in the environment.

- www.ecomall.com
  Listings of ecologically friendly practices, places, shopping, businesses and related links.

- www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/house/
  Lists some of the common household hazardous wastes, their alternatives and disposal options via an interactive house tour.

- www.epa.gov/kidshometour/tour.htm#view
  An interactive house tour for common household hazardous products, why they’re hazardous and what you should do to reduce and or properly recycle these hazardous products.

- www.prrdy.com/household.htm
  Numerous recipes for non-toxic household cleaning supplies, pest management, lawn and garden care, as well as ways to reduce, reuse and recycle household hazardous waste.

- www.npic.orst.edu/pest.htm
  Lots of information and links on how to deal with a variety of home, lawn and garden pests.

- www.state.vt.us/agric/homepest.htm
  Information on integrated pest management.

- www.beyondpesticides.org/main.html
  Pesticide fact sheets, alternatives and other articles on pesticides.

- www.1-800-222-1222.info/poisonhelp.asp
  Poison control center contact information and resources.

SOLID WASTE DISTRICTS:

- ADDISON COUNTY
  SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
  (802) 388-2333

- BENNINGTON REGIONAL
  PLANNING COMMISSION
  (802) 375-2576

- CENTRAL VERMONT
  SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
  1-800-730-9475 OR (802) 229-9383

- CHITTENDEN
  SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
  (802) 872-8111

- GREATER UPPER VALLEY
  SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
  (802) 296-3688

- LAMOILLE REGIONAL
  SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
  (802) 888-7317

- MAD RIVER SOLID WASTE ALLIANCE
  (802) 244-7373

- NORTHEAST KINGDOM
  WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
  1-800-734-4602 OR (802) 626-3532

- NORTHWEST VERMONT
  SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
  (802) 524-5986

- SOUTHERN WINDSOR/ WINDHAM COUNTY
  SOLID WASTE MGMT DISTRICT
  (603) 543-1201 OR (802) 885-5827

- RUTLAND COUNTY
  SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
  (802) 775-7209 OR 802-773-4083

- SOLID WASTE ALLIANCE COMMUNITIES (SWAC)
  (518) 854-9702

- WHITE RIVER
  ALLIANCE
  (802) 234-9340

- WINDHAM SOLID
  WASTE DISTRICT
  (802) 257-0272

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Environmental Assistance Division
1-802-241-3472

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