

# Hazardous Chemicals!

*What you need to know  
to protect your family  
and our water resources.*





## What are hazardous household products?

You probably use a variety of chemical products when you care for yourself, your home, your yard and your garden. Many of these common household products contain hazardous chemicals. When we no longer want these products, they become hazardous waste.

A substance is considered hazardous if it is flammable, explosive or reactive, corrosive or toxic.

**Flammable** — These are wastes that can easily catch fire.

**Explosive or reactive** — These can explode when combined with other substances.

**Corrosive** — These are acidic or alkaline wastes that can burn or corrode other materials.

**Toxic** — These are poisonous or can be harmful or fatal if swallowed, inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

**Read the label!** You can tell if a product is hazardous if the label uses words such as: **CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER or POISON.**

# What are some common hazardous household products?

The following list shows common household items containing potentially hazardous ingredients that might be found in your garage or other storage space in your home.

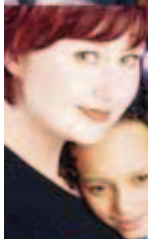
## Cleaning Products

- Oven cleaners
- Drain cleaners
- Wood and metal cleaners and polishes
- Toilet cleaners
- Tub, tile and shower cleaners
- Bleach (laundry)
- Pool chemicals



## Indoor Pesticides

- Ant sprays and baits
- Cockroach sprays and baits
- Flea repellents and shampoos
- Bug sprays
- Houseplant insecticides
- Moth repellents
- Mouse and rat poisons and baits



## Automotive Products

- Motor oil
- Fuel additives
- Starter fluids
- Antifreeze
- Automotive batteries
- Carburetor and fuel injection cleaners
- Air conditioning refrigerants
- Transmission and brake fluid



## Workshop/Painting Supplies

- Adhesives and glues
- Furniture strippers
- Oil- or enamel-based paint
- Stains and finishes
- Paint thinners and turpentine
- Paint strippers and removers
- Photographic chemicals
- Fixatives and other solvents



## Lawn and Garden Products

- Herbicides
- Insecticides
- Fungicides/  
wood  
preservatives



## Miscellaneous

- Batteries
- Mercury thermostats or thermometers
- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Driveway sealer



## Other Flammable Products

- Kerosene
- Home heating oil
- Diesel fuel
- Gas/oil mix
- Lighter fluid
- Propane tanks and other compressed gas cylinders



# Why are hazardous household products a problem?

Even when small amounts of waste left in containers are thrown out in the trash, they may pollute groundwater or surface water at a landfill. Products that are poured down the drain, onto the ground, or washed into gutters or storm drains can damage septic and sewer systems and can contaminate groundwater and surface waters. Improper storage of these products within reach of children, or in unmarked or unsealed containers, is a safety hazard.





## What can I do about hazardous household waste?

- Educate yourself. Learn about the products you use in your home, garden and workshop, and about how waste is managed in your community.
- Always read and follow all directions and precautions on labels.
- Try to use up products for their intended purpose. If you do have some left, try to share it with your friends or neighbors, or perhaps with community groups.
- Dispose of unused hazardous household wastes properly.
- Replace the potentially hazardous substances with other products that are safer, cheaper and equally effective. (See below for some safe alternative products you can easily make at home.)

## What are some safe alternatives?

A simple strategy for keeping hazardous materials out of the house is by using homemade substitutes with less dangerous, and often much cheaper, ingredients. The alternatives will achieve the same effect without the threat to our natural environment. Some common alternatives to everyday needs are:

**Aerosols:** Use pump spray or other nonaerosol versions of cleaning and grooming products.

**Air freshener:** Open a window or use an exhaust fan — or both. Sprinkle baking soda in odor-producing areas or set vinegar out in an open dish. Place an open box of baking soda in the refrigerator to absorb food odors.

**All-purpose cleaner:** Mix 1/2 cup ammonia, 1/4 cup white vinegar and a handful of baking soda in a gallon of warm water. (Don't use this mixture on wood. Instead, use oil soap.)


**Ceramic tile cleaner:** Measure 1/4 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup white vinegar and 1 cup ammonia into a bucket. Add 1 gallon warm water and stir until baking soda dissolves.

**Disinfectant and germicide:** Wash items with water and soap, borax or sodium carbonate monohydrate (washing soda). Wash large surfaces with a solution of 1/2 cup borax dissolved in 1 gallon of hot water.

**Drain cleaner:** Prevent clogging by covering drains with screens to keep out grease, food scraps and hair. To loosen blockage, mix 1 cup each of baking soda, salt and white vinegar, and pour down the drain. Wait 15 minutes. Flush drain thoroughly with boiling water. Use rubber plunger or plumber's snake if drain is seriously clogged.

**Floor wax and stripper:** To polish linoleum and vinyl floors, mix 1 part thick boiled starch with 1 part soap suds. Rub mixture on floor and polish dry with a clean, soft cloth. To remove old wax, pour





small amount of club soda on a section of floor. Scrub well. Let soak for a few minutes and wipe clean.

**Furniture polish:** Use olive oil, or beeswax and olive oil, or mix 2 teaspoons lemon oil and 1 pint mineral oil in a spray bottle.

**Glass cleaner:** Mix equal amounts of water and white vinegar in a spray bottle.

**Mothballs:** Place cedar chips or sprigs of dried tansy around clothes, or store clothes in a cedar chest.

**Oven cleaner:** (Do not use these methods in self-cleaning or continuous-cleaning ovens.) After oven cools, wipe away grease and spills. To remove baked-on grease and spills, scrub with a baking soda, salt and water paste; or sprinkle with dry baking soda, wait 5 minutes, then scrub with a damp cloth. (Don't let baking soda touch wires or heating elements.) Scour racks and burner inserts with steel wool.

**Silver cleaner:** Pour water into aluminum or enameled pan lined with aluminum foil on the bottom. Fill to depth of 2 to 3 inches (enough to cover silver). Add 1 teaspoon baking soda and 1 teaspoon salt; heat until water boils. Add tarnished silver and boil 3 minutes. Remove silver, wash in soapy water and polish dry. (Not for use on silver jewelry, silver items with glued components, or flatware with hollow handles.)

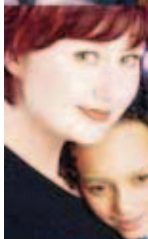
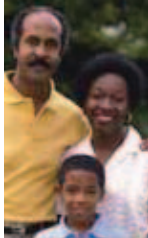
**Spot remover:** For butter, coffee, gravy or chocolate stains, immediately sponge up or scrape off as much as possible. Dab with a cloth dampened with a solution of 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 quart cold water. For stains that have set, try a dab of full-strength white vinegar, or put paper towels underneath to blot and apply a solution of equal parts ammonia and water. (If an ammonia stain remains, blot with a solution of table salt and water.)

**Toilet bowl cleaner:** To clean and deodorize porcelain, use mixture of 1/2 cup borax in 1 gallon of water. Scrub and flush.

***DO NOT*** mix anything with a commercial cleaning agent.

When preparing alternatives, mix only what is needed for the job at hand and mix them in clean, reusable containers. This avoids waste and the need to store any cleaning mixture. If you do store a homemade mixture, make sure it is properly labeled and do not store it in a container that could be mistaken for food or beverage.

*Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*



## What are my recycling and disposal options?

Your county has a collection and waste management program that offers a safe and free way to dispose of or recycle hazardous household waste. Contact your county waste management division for information on locations and hours. (This service is for county residents only and does not apply to the disposal of waste generated by businesses.) Listed below are telephone numbers of the county contacts within the 16-county area of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (see map on back cover).



### **Charlotte County**

Environmental  
Services  
(941) 764-4360

### **Citrus County**

Solid Waste  
Management  
(352) 527-7670

### **DeSoto County**

Environmental  
Services  
(863) 993-4826

### **Hardee County**

Solid Waste  
(863) 773-5089

### **Hernando County**

Solid Waste and  
Recycling  
(352) 754-4112

### **Highlands County**

Solid Waste  
Management  
(863) 655-6477

### **Hillsborough County**

Solid Waste  
Management  
(813) 272-5680

**Lake County**

Environmental  
Services  
(352) 343-3776

**Levy County**

Hazardous Waste  
(352) 486-3300

**Manatee County**

Solid Waste/  
Recycling  
(941) 798-6761

**Marion County**

Solid Waste  
(352) 671-8465

**Pasco County**

Hazardous Waste  
(727) 847-8041

**Pinellas County**

Solid Waste  
(727) 464-7500

**Polk County**

Solid Waste  
Division  
(863) 284-4319

**Sarasota County**

Environmental  
Services  
(941) 861-1531

**Sumter County**

Public Works  
(352) 793-0240

To report **illegal disposal  
of hazardous chemicals:**

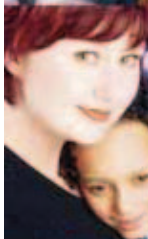
Florida Department  
of Environmental Protection  
**(813) 632-7600**

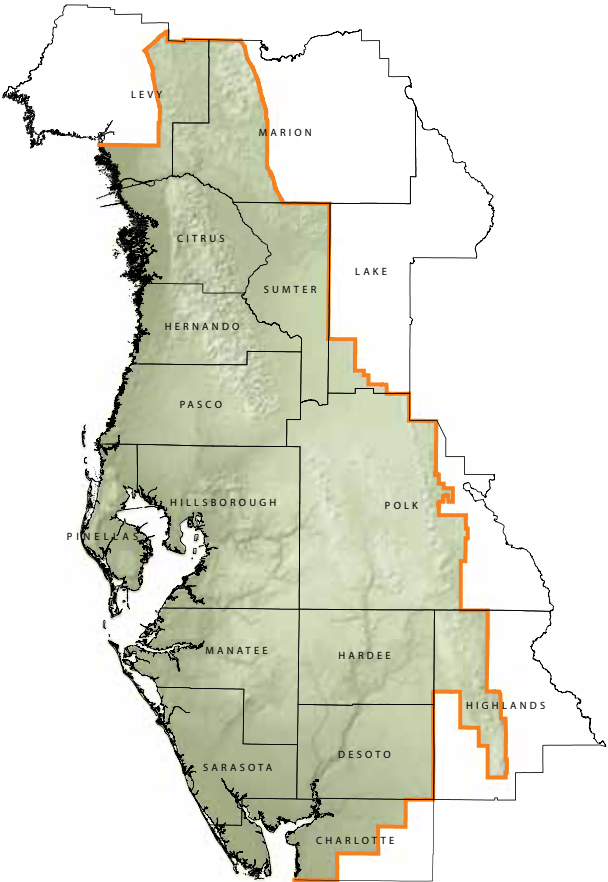
To **recycle used motor oil** —  
find a location near you:

**[www.Earth911.com](http://www.Earth911.com)**  
**1-800-CleanUp**

To **obtain additional information  
about protecting our water  
resources:**

Southwest Florida  
Water Management District  
**[www.WaterMatters.org](http://www.WaterMatters.org)**





The Southwest Florida Water Management District encompasses 10,000 square miles in all or part of 16 counties on the west-central coast of Florida, from Charlotte County in the south to Levy County in the north. It also extends from the Gulf of Mexico east to Polk and Highlands counties.



WATERMATTERS.ORG • 1-800-423-1476

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) does not discriminate on the basis of disability. This nondiscrimination policy involves every aspect of the District's functions, including access to and participation in the District's programs and activities. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation as provided for in the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the District's Human Resources Director, 2379 Broad St., Brooksville, FL 34604-6899; telephone (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only), ext. 4702; TDD 1-800-231-6103 (FL only); or email [ADACoordinator@WaterMatters.org](mailto:ADACoordinator@WaterMatters.org).