



## Household Hazardous Products and Wastes: A Guide to Handling and Disposal

### The Problem

Many everyday products used around the house have the potential to harm human health or the environment. Paints, thinners and solvents, cleaning products, pesticides, aerosol cans, motor oil, antifreeze, lead/acid batteries, smoke alarms, fluorescent lights and some personal care items are examples of common hazardous materials found in homes.

In the past, the potential dangers of these products and their wastes were not well understood. Today we know that improper handling of Household Hazardous Products (HHP) and Household Hazardous Wastes (HHW) can cause:

- groundwater contamination
- surface water contamination
- soil contamination
- poisoning of the food chain
- harm to the health and lives of people and wildlife
- local air pollution
- fires and explosions

Since households are a major source of potentially dangerous products and wastes, we all need to do our part to make sure they are handled and disposed of properly.

### The Solution: Choose and Use Wisely

The first step in reducing the risk is to **reduce** the use of hazardous products:

- **Avoid** hazardous products by using environmentally friendly alternatives.
- Buy only the amount you need to do the job.
- Use all that you buy.
- If you can't use all of the product, trade or give the remainder to someone else who can use it.

Once you have purchased a hazardous product, protect yourself and others by using it properly; most hazardous products present a danger only when they are handled carelessly.

- Where possible, use hazardous products outside or in a well ventilated area.
- Follow the label instructions.
- Use the recommended amount.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing, glasses, and gloves.
- Clean up well when you're done.
- Store the unused portion in the original sealed container out of the reach of children and animals.
- **NEVER** mix hazardous products.

## Disposal Options

If you can't find someone to use the remainder of the product, it is your responsibility to arrange for proper disposal. The Special Waste Regulations under Yukon's *Environment Act* prohibit the release of household hazardous wastes into the environment. You don't need a permit to generate or store your own household hazardous waste or to transport it to an approved disposal facility, but you do need to handle it carefully and dispose of it properly. There are several options for proper disposal:

### 1. Annual Special Waste Collection

The Department of Environment ships special wastes out of the Yukon once a year. The Department pays for collecting and transporting the wastes, while the person who generates the waste is responsible for the disposal costs, which vary depending on the type and volume of special waste collected. This service is available to special waste generators in all Yukon communities, and is usually held each year in the fall. For more information, please contact the Environmental Programs Branch.

### 2. Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days

Watch for advertisements of household hazardous waste collection days in your community. These events are sponsored by community organizations with financial and technical support from the Department of Environment. If your organization is interested in holding a household hazardous waste collection day in your community, please contact the Environmental Programs Branch for details.

### 3. Collection by a Permitted Facility

Several Yukon businesses have permits to collect certain kinds of special waste from generators for proper treatment or disposal. Please contact the Environmental Programs Branch for a current list of permitted facilities.

## Disposal Methods

Waste	Preferred Disposal Method
waste oil	Participate in the annual Special Waste Collection, a local HHW Collection, or try to find a local special waste management facility with an oil burner that will accept your oil
antifreeze	Participate in the annual Special Waste Collection or a local HHW Collection
aerosol cans (empty or not)	Participate in the annual Special Waste Collection or a local HHW Collection
thinners/solvents/cleaners	If it has a hazard symbol or warning, participate in the annual Special Waste Collection or a local HHW Collection
paints	Dry out oil or water-based paint in a covered, well-ventilated area and then dispose with regular garbage, or take to Whitehorse dump's paint exchange program
pesticides	Participate in the annual Special Waste Collection or a local HHW Collection
automotive batteries	Participate in the annual Special Waste Collection, a local HHW Collection, or take to the designated area at the Whitehorse dump
medication	Contact your pharmacy; most have informal prescription take-back programs

## Spills

The Special Waste Regulations state that a person who possesses or controls a special waste at the time of a release (spill), or who causes a release, **must report the incident**. Containment and clean-up action should begin as soon as possible to protect human health and the environment.

**Spills must be reported immediately to the  
Yukon Spills Report Centre in Whitehorse at (867) 667-7244  
(24 hour service), or an Environmental Protection Officer.**

*Collect calls are accepted.*

## Other Topics

Fact Sheets are also available on the following topics:

- Special Waste Regulations
- Handling Guidelines for Solid Waste Facilities
- Disposal Options
- Storage Options
- Used Oil
- Used Batteries
- Used Antifreeze
- Used Solvents
- Used Oil from Piston Aircraft
- Dust Suppressants
- Photochemical Waste

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**For more information on the annual Special Waste Collection, local Household Hazardous Waste Collections, or the Special Waste Regulations, please contact:**

Environmental Programs Branch  
Department of Environment (V-8)  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Y1A 2C6

Phone: (867) 667-5683  
Toll Free: 1-800-661-0408 extension 5683  
Fax: (867) 393-6205  
email: [envprot@gov.yk.ca](mailto:envprot@gov.yk.ca)

Copies of Yukon regulations may be viewed online at <http://environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/monitoringenvironment/> under the "Standards & Approvals" section, or at any Yukon Public Library, territorial agent, territorial representative or regional services office. You may purchase copies at the Inquiry Centre, Yukon Government Administration Building, 2071-2nd Avenue in Whitehorse, or by mail from the Subscriptions Clerk, Yukon Government Queen's Printer, Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6 (phone (867) 667-5783 or toll free 1-800-661-0408 extension 5783).

