

## Alternative Cleaners

### *Less Toxic Solutions*

Below is a list of less toxic alternative products. By using these homemade substitutes you will save money and make your home a safer place to live.

#### **Drain Cleaner**

*Clean clogged pipes with a snake or plunger. Run boiling water down the drain*

#### **Rug and Upholstery Cleaner**

*Clean immediately with soda water and baking soda paste, then vacuum*

#### **Spot Remover**

*Immediately soak in cold water, lemon juice, club soda, or corn meal and water*

#### **Tub and Tile Cleaner**

*Rub area with one-half lemon dipped in borax or baking soda. Rinse and let dry*

#### **Toilet Bowl Cleaner**

*Use toilet brush and baking soda, mild detergent, or ½ cup bleach*

#### **Glass Cleaner**

*Use ¼ to ½ teaspoon vegetable oil-based soap, 3 tablespoons vinegar, 2 cups water. Place all ingredients in a spray bottle, shake, and use as you would any commercial window washing brand. Or use 2 tablespoons vinegar in 1 quart water, and wipe glass with newspaper*

#### **Furniture Polish**

*Melt 1 tablespoon Canauba Wax into 2 cups mineral oil. For lemon oil polish, dissolve 1 teaspoon lemon oil into 1 pint mineral oil*

#### **Brass and Copper Cleaner**

*Scrub with a used half lemon dipped in salt*

#### **Silver Cleaner**

*Soak in 1 quart warm water with 1 teaspoon baking soda, and a small piece of aluminum foil*

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#### **Geauga SWCD Mission:**

*"To conserve, protect, and enhance the resources of Geauga County by providing leadership, education, and assistance to all."*

*Last Revision: 10/6/03*

*All services are provided without regard to race, religion, gender, age, physical or mental handicap, national origin or politics.*



**Geauga Soil and Water  
Conservation District**

# Household Chemicals and You

## A Guide for Proper Disposal of Household Chemical Waste

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## Household Chemicals and Their Potential Risks

Most of us use common household items such as paints, cleaners, automotive fluids, batteries, and pesticides. Many of these common products contain hazardous or toxic chemicals. The portions we don't use become waste and the way we dispose of them can have some devastating, long-lasting consequences. By pouring these chemicals down the drain, into a storm sewer, on the ground, or even in the trash, we can pollute the environment and endanger our health.

Many of us are more likely to associate hazardous materials with the image of a skull and cross-bones than with toilet bowl cleaner. Just because you bought something at the supermarket or hardware store doesn't mean it's safe for your family, your pets, or the environment.

Products containing hazardous chemicals must be handled and used with care and disposed of or recycled in special facilities. When using hazardous products, think ahead so that you're ready if something goes wrong.



*The average household contains 63 different hazardous chemicals*

## Hazards

When they are not used up, certain household chemicals can become household hazardous waste (HHW). Many household products contain the same chemicals as strictly regulated industrial wastes and pose similar environmental problems. Although the quantities of chemicals disposed of by individual households may be small, the number of households in Geauga County are many, and the amount of waste adds up.

There are many potential hazards in not caring for household chemical waste properly.

- Each year nearly one million children under the age of five are exposed to potentially poisonous medicines and household chemicals. Cleaning substances are the most common cause of home poisonings. Using readily available less toxic or non-toxic alternative cleaners will make your home safer.
- A single granule of a common insecticide that's often used to control ants (Diazinon) can kill a bird. Ant baits are safer and they wipe out the ant nest, so they are more effective in the long run.
- The sweet smell of antifreeze attracts pets, especially dogs, which may lap it up and get sick or die. A new type of antifreeze that contains propylene glycol is safer.



*Americans who change their own oil throw away an estimated 120 million gallons of reusable oil every year.*

## Hazards of Improper Disposal

Basements, garages, sheds and closets across the County are home to a wide variety of potentially harmful materials. Disposing of these items can be a challenge, as personal and environmental damage can occur if they are disposed of in the trash, poured down the drain or dumped on the ground.

- Leftover or unwanted chemicals poured down a storm sewer or curb inlet will end up in the nearest waterway, poisoning aquatic habitat and wildlife. The fate of harmful chemicals dumped on the ground is the same. The toxic residues are washed into our surface waters the next time it rains. It doesn't take much waste to pollute more water than you could drink in a lifetime. For instance, the used motor oil from one oil change (four quarts) can contaminate more than two million gallons of water.
- Tossing our HHW in the trash is by far the most common method of disposal. This poses an exposure threat to our sanitation crews. In addition, unpredictable chemical reactions can take place, sparking an explosion or fire aboard the garbage truck. Another potential danger of disposing HHW in the trash is groundwater contamination.



**Geauga County offers collection dates to its residents. The collections are generally held at the Geauga County Engineer's Yard, and are hosted by the Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste Management District. For more information about these dates and what types of waste are accepted, contact the Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste Management District at 1-800-707-2673 or visit their website at [www.startrecycling.com](http://www.startrecycling.com).**