

MSU-ES Dawg Tracks



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Safe Handling of Household Chemicals



Every year new environmental regulations are created that affect the way industry creates the goods that we consume. Industry is expected by private citizens, like us, to handle their hazardous chemicals and waste properly. Do we ever stop to think how we handle our home chemicals and waste and how we may dispose of them?

We have many products at home or in our garages and/or storage rooms that can be hazardous, depending upon how we store and dispose of them. We should get familiar with them, if we aren't already. Following is a list of probable products that we might have and need to get familiar with their location and purpose:

- Automotive fluids such as oil, anti-freeze, windshield washer solution, brake fluid and maybe transmission fluid.
- Household cleaners – bleach, ammonia, disinfectants, air fresheners, carpet fresheners, window cleaner, furniture polish.
- Laundry products – detergents, fabric softeners, etc.
- Health & Beauty products – hair spray, shampoo, fingernail polish and removers, hair coloring and medications.
- Lawn and garden products – pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, oil and gasoline, etc.
- Outdoor cooking products – charcoal briquettes, charcoal lighter, propane gas, etc.
- Home maintenance products - paint, paint removers, stains, varnish, rodent poisons, etc.

As we look at these products, we may not stop to think or consider that these are dangerous or hazardous, but with misuse they can be a problem.

READ THE PRODUCT LABELS -

Read the labels and handle hazardous products very carefully.

Three words to look for: **DANGER-WARNING-CAUTION.**

Poison – can injure or kill if absorbed through the skin, injected or inhaled.

Toxic – can cause injury or death if swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin.

Irritant – causes soreness or swelling of skin, eyes, mucous membranes, or the respiratory system.

Flammable – easy to catch fire and tends to burn very fast.

Flammable Liquid – has a flash point below 140 degrees F (100 deg. F – for US DOT purposes).

Combustible liquids – has a flash point from 140 deg. F (100 deg. F for US DOT purposes).

Corrosive - a chemical or its vapors that can cause a material to be destroyed.

OTHER TIPS FOR HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL SAFETY -

- **Buy only what you need** - Overbuying creates a surplus that may or may not be used.
- **Keep out of reach of children** – Obviously, chemicals can be dangerous, so they should be stored out of reach of children. Teach your children the dangers that they present. It's also a good idea to keep emergency phone numbers close by so that if emergency is needed, you have it conveniently to you.
- **Don't store chemicals with food** – All of your household chemicals, as well as garden or yard pesticides, must be separated from food products.
- **Don't store flammable liquids or gases inside the home** – Gasoline, kerosene, propane gas, automotive fluids, charcoal lighter should be segregated and not inside the home. Containers for your gasoline or kerosene should be stored in approved containers, like Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- **Keep chemicals in original containers** – All the chemicals should be maintained in their **original** containers for obvious reasons. However, if a chemical has to be relocated to another container, make sure that is appropriate to hold the substance and that it is relabeled for identification.
- **Recycle** – Many products are recyclable. Contact the local environmental authorities for assistance on the acceptable avenue for recycling.
- **Use alternate products** – Some alternatives for less hazardous products are available. An example that we use is pouring baking soda and vinegar down our drains to keep them clear as opposed to buying Drano or other commercial brands of drain cleaners.
- **Dispose of products properly** – Hazardous products should never be deposited down drains or poured out on the ground. Many products shouldn't even be disposed of in the trash or down the toilet. We should save these leftovers and contact the local environment services for directions of disposal or check on dates for hazardous waste "Amnesty Days." Empty containers can be tripled washed, a hole punched in the bottom of the plastic ones, allow them to dry and you can dispose of them in your garbage, without possible repercussions from your local waste management people.
- **Post emergency phone numbers in prominent locations** – As mentioned above, make a note card of the emergency phone numbers for the pertinent agencies in your area and place these in locations around phones and other high profile locations in the home for easy access.

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Excerpts: <http://environmentalchemistry.com/yogi/environmental>

**SAFE USE & DISPOSAL -
MEANS A SAFER TOMORROW!**

SAFETY - DO IT FOR OUR FAMILY!!