

Tox Away Day Provides Safe Way to Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste

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This Saturday (June 4) will be the annual Vanderburgh County “Tox Away Day.” This household hazardous waste collection event, sponsored by the Vanderburgh County Solid Waste District, will run from 9 am to 1 pm at the Evansville Civic Center parking lot, located at the corner of Ninth Street and Walnut Avenue.

This program provides residents of Vanderburgh County a safe disposal option for household hazardous chemicals. Master Gardeners and I will be on hand to provide advice about ways to properly store, handle and dispose of these materials. We can also provide information on reducing our reliance on chemical pesticides.

Here is a list of items that will be accepted this year:

- Motor Oil & Filters
- Automotive Batteries & Fluids
- Gasoline
- Antifreeze
- Household Batteries
- Pesticides & Herbicides
- Thermometers/Mercury
- Aerosol Cans
- Household Cleaners
- Glues & Adhesives
- Photographic Chemicals
- Pool Chemicals
- Fluorescent Bulbs
- Pharmaceuticals
- Oil Based Paint
- Solvents & Thinners

Items that will not be accepted include:

- Commercial Waste
- Infectious Waste
- Industrial Waste
- Smoke Detectors
- Explosives/Ammunition
- Radioactive Waste
- Pressurized Containers
- Fire Extinguishers

- Gas Cylinders
- Appliances
- Electronics
- Tires
- Latex Paint (can be thrown away in regular trash when it is hard - air dry or add kitty litter or sawdust to solidify).

Proper disposal of hazardous waste is essential for a safe and healthy environment. Chemicals poured down the drain will destroy the beneficial bacteria inside your septic tank. If you're on city sewer, the problems are even worse! Toxic chemicals are not filtered out by sewage treatment plant, and so end up in the Ohio River. This can cause fish kills, algae blooms, and health problems to swimmers. It can also taint the drinking water of our neighbors downstream of us.

Hazardous wastes dumped in the trash can also cause dangerous situations. Spills or leaks can contaminate the trucks and harm the workers who may not be adequately protected. Paint or other liquids could leak out of the truck and splash along city streets. When these toxic products reach the landfill, they will be present for many years to come. Modern sanitary landfills are designed not to leak; however, age, accidents, and the inevitable earthquake from the New Madrid fault could allow these products a chance to contaminate groundwater.

There are numerous ways to reduce the amounts of household hazardous waste being generated. Buy the least toxic product that will do the job. Buy only what you need for that job: while a larger can may be more economical, if you never use it, you've lost money and have generated toxic waste that must be disposed of. If you have leftover products, give them to friends, neighbors, or community groups in the original container with the label intact. Motor oil can be recycled for free by bringing it to various oil change companies.

For more information about recycling or disposing of materials, please contact the Solid Waste office at (812) 436-7800. For information on reducing pesticide usage, contact the Purdue Extension Service at (812) 435-5287.