

## One Family, One Box, One Hour

Spring cleaning is a good time to think about cleaning out unwanted hazardous household products and properly disposing of them.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the average household has 100 pounds of such products.

Here are several reasons for doing a regular clean out:

- You may already be replacing hazardous products with safer alternatives.
- The products may be more hazardous than you want to have around. Products labeled “Poison” or “Danger,” are typically the most hazardous.
- Containers may be leaking, rusted, or without labels or lids.
- Products take up space. The more you have the more there is to manage, to store, to keep away from children or pets, etc.
- The longer you keep a product, the greater the chance of an accident.

Some products are used slowly and are effective for a long time. However, for many products you may want to use some version of the “one-year” rule. If you haven’t used the product for a year (or two), you may not need it and your best option is proper disposal.

Before you start, contact your local household hazardous waste program and find out what kinds of products they accept and when they are open. Here is a Web site with contacts for your local household hazardous waste program:

[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/mrw/mrw\\_contacts.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/mrw/mrw_contacts.html)

Common hazardous household products include the following:

- cleaners
- polishes – wood and metal
- drain openers
- weed and brush killer
- paints and other coatings
- automotive fluids
- insecticides (indoor kinds, especially “bug bombs”)



By just looking under the sink, in the garage, or in your garden shed you will get an idea of which products you have on hand, so that you don't have to purchase duplicates. (Sometimes you can share products you don't need with neighbor or friend).

Take a box and fill it with unwanted products. Once your box is full, place it in the trunk or truck bed and take it to your local household hazardous waste disposal site. Follow these tips for safely transporting your hazardous waste:

- Don't mix products.
- Keep products in original containers.
- Preserve labels whenever possible.
- Secure products so they can't tip over or leak. Use a sturdy box or a plastic tub, not a plastic bag.
- Secure the load.
- If you use a box, line it with a plastic bag or place the box inside the bag. This will catch any spills or drips.
- Store products away from the passenger compartment of your vehicle, such as in the trunk or truck bed.



Depending on your travel time, the whole process will usually take about an hour.



Call toll-free 1-866-939-9991 or visit the [Toxic Free Tips Web site](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/toxicfreetips) for shopping and safety tips, and information on safer alternatives. E-mail your questions to <mailto:toxicfreetips@ecy.wa.gov>

*If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.*