

Household Hazardous Waste Collections

WHAT ARE THE WATER PROTECTION OBJECTIVES OF HHW COLLECTIONS?

To encourage local governments to provide household hazardous waste collections for their citizens. Providing collections for proper management of common household hazardous waste can keep it out of our water supplies. To educate local officials about the options for collections.

WHY DO WE NEED HHW COLLECTIONS FOR WATER QUALITY?

Leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients are considered to be “household hazardous waste” or “HHW.” Products, such as oil-based paints, cleaners, oils, rechargeable batteries, and pesticides that contain potentially hazardous ingredients require special care when disposed of. Americans generate 1.6 million tons of HHW per year.

The average home can accumulate 100 pounds of HHW in the basement, garage, and storage cupboards. Improper disposal of household hazardous wastes can include pouring them down the drain, on the ground, into storm sewers, or in some cases putting them out with the trash. The dangers of such disposal methods might not be immediately obvious, but improper disposal of these wastes can pollute the environment and pose a threat to human health.

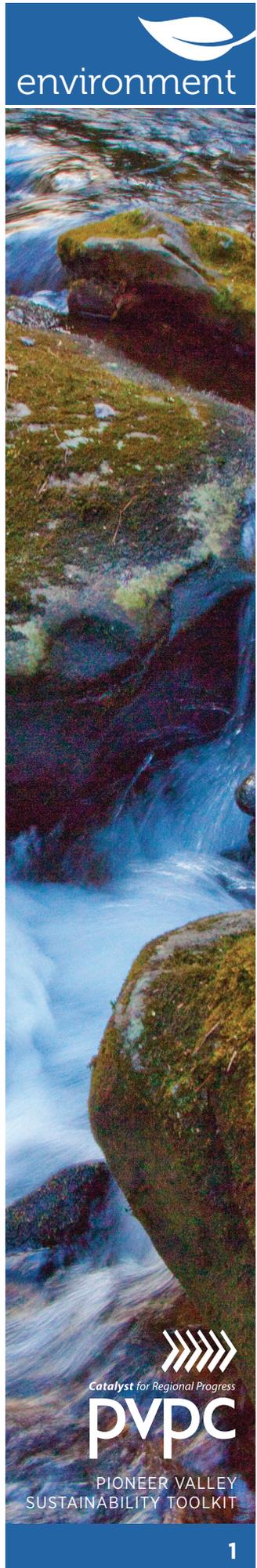
All Purpose Cleaner Recipes

Mix 2 tablespoons vinegar, 1 teaspoon Borax or washing soda, and 2 cups hot water in a spray bottle and shake. Add ¼ cup liquid soap. Mix gently.

Baking soda can be used for scouring powder.

Vinegar removes soap scum, grease and mineral deposits and acts as a deodorizer.

Use white distilled vinegar. Mix with water to wash non-wax floors.





HOW DO HHW COLLECTIONS PROTECT WATER QUALITY?

HHW collections protect water quality by providing options to their citizens for proper management. Most HHW is highly regulated and must be managed by licensed personnel or contractors. However, local governments can provide daily collection of some HHW. “Universal Waste” is a type of HHW which the federal government allows to be collected and stored at municipal facilities because the waste type is so common. This includes rechargeable and other hazardous content batteries, fluorescent light bulbs and tubes, mercury-containing items such as thermostats and thermometers, and some pesticides. States may modify the definition and add other materials to be included in the definition of universal waste. For example, New Hampshire added electronics to their definition.

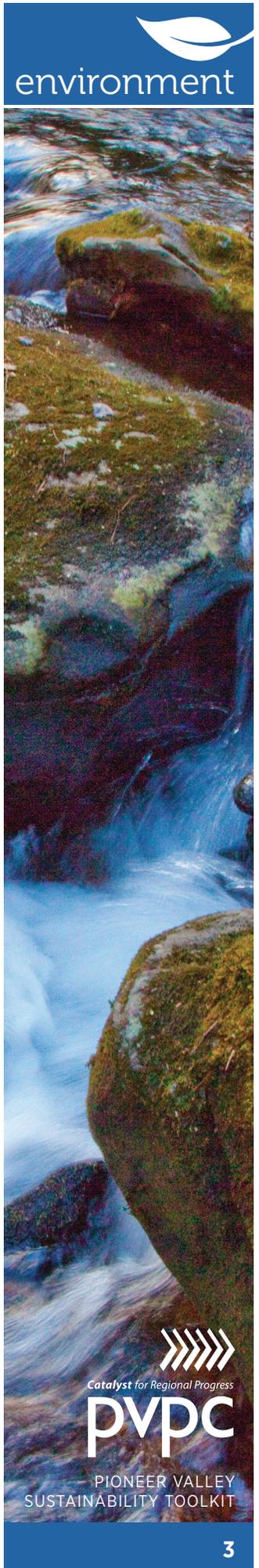
HOW AND WHERE ARE HHW COLLECTIONS USED TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY?

There are several options for managing HHW. The first as with all waste is to discourage purchasing it to begin with. Educate people about non-toxic alternatives, especially for cleaners. And if hazardous products are purchased, they should be used up rather than becoming waste. Educate your community about hazardous materials collection events and drop off locations. Many retail stores and municipal facilities provide daily collection of some materials such as used oil, car batteries, rechargeable batteries and cell phones, fluorescent bulbs, and electronics. Often this service is provided for free or a minimal fee.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF HHW COLLECTION OPTIONS:

Swap Shops — Can be used to trade useable materials instead of discarding as waste, such as common garden pesticides and oil-based paint. One disadvantage is these shops can become overrun with materials, increasing the risk of a spill, or mixing inappropriate materials and creating a greater hazard by doing so.

Multiple or Single Day Collections — Typically, a public works garage or other municipal facility with shelter, toilets, safety equipment, and pavement is identified. A licensed contractor is hired who sets up the collection area. This can be open to residents and/or commercial small quantity generators. Often the participating towns will pay the cost for their residents using the collections. Institutions and businesses can pre-register and pay in advance or at the collection. Non-participating town residents may be allowed to attend the collection if they pay for their waste at the collection. All New Hampshire towns are serviced by this method.



Permanent Facilities — Often sited with existing transfer stations, these structures must be built to standards to provide safe storage for materials and be accessible and safe for users. They must be able to contain spills, be well ventilated and have some fireproofing. Appropriate containers must be available to store the various materials on site. The Hartford, Vermont facility meets the requirements for a permanent facility, but functions as a fixed site for multiple day collections instead.

Curbside Collection — These collections are typically arranged with individual households prior to the collection, or they are scheduled by the community a few times a year. Participating households and businesses are required to properly label and store their waste. The container of waste is then placed in a specified location, not on the street, to prevent spills or vandalism. This is generally the most expensive form of collection.

Mobile Unit Pick-Up — These collections are similar to the Multiple or Single Day Collections but require a specially built or modified vehicle designed to collect as well as transport the materials to its final management destination. The mobile units follow a route within the service area, stay for a specified period, and then move the whole operation to the next site.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
413-781-6045

60 Congress Street, Floor 1
Springfield, MA 01104-3419

www.pvpc.org