Safe Management Methods

Because of the potential risks associated with household hazardous wastes, it is important that people always use, store and dispose of materials containing hazardous substances safely. Use and store products containing hazardous substances carefully to prevent any accidents at home. Never store hazardous products in food containers. Keep products containing hazardous materials in their original containers and never remove the labels. Corroding containers however, should be repackaged and clearly labeled. This will prevent accidental ingestion and also can help protect sanitation workers. Never mix household hazardous waste with other products. Incompatibles may react, ignite or explode. Contaminated household hazardous waste may become unrecyclable.

Hazardous Waste Information

Read the Label

Choose the least hazardous product that will do the job. Label signal words indicate the degree of potential hazard:

- None - relatively nonhazardous
- Caution/Warning - mild to moderate hazard
- Danger - more hazardous or toxic
- Poison - highly toxic, can be fatal

Use Products Safely

- Read and follow label directions
- Use caution around children, persons with health conditions or pets
- Never mix products...especially chlorine bleach with ammonia or acids
- Avoid or minimize skin contact
- Wash exposed skin
- Do not use around food
- Avoid breathing vapors or mists
- Keep flammable products away from ignition sources

Store Products Safely

- Store products in dry, cool, well-ventilated locked area away from food and out of reach of children and pets
- Store corrosive, flammable and toxic products separately
- Store products in original containers with legible labels
- Never use containers for other storage

Dispose of Products Safely

- Don't pour into drains, toilets or storm sewers
- Wrap corroded packages carefully before disposal
- Don't keep expired products
- Use your landfill for approved waste only
- Use community collections
- Recycle when appropriate

Clip & Save

For more information about disposal and recycling of household chemical products, call

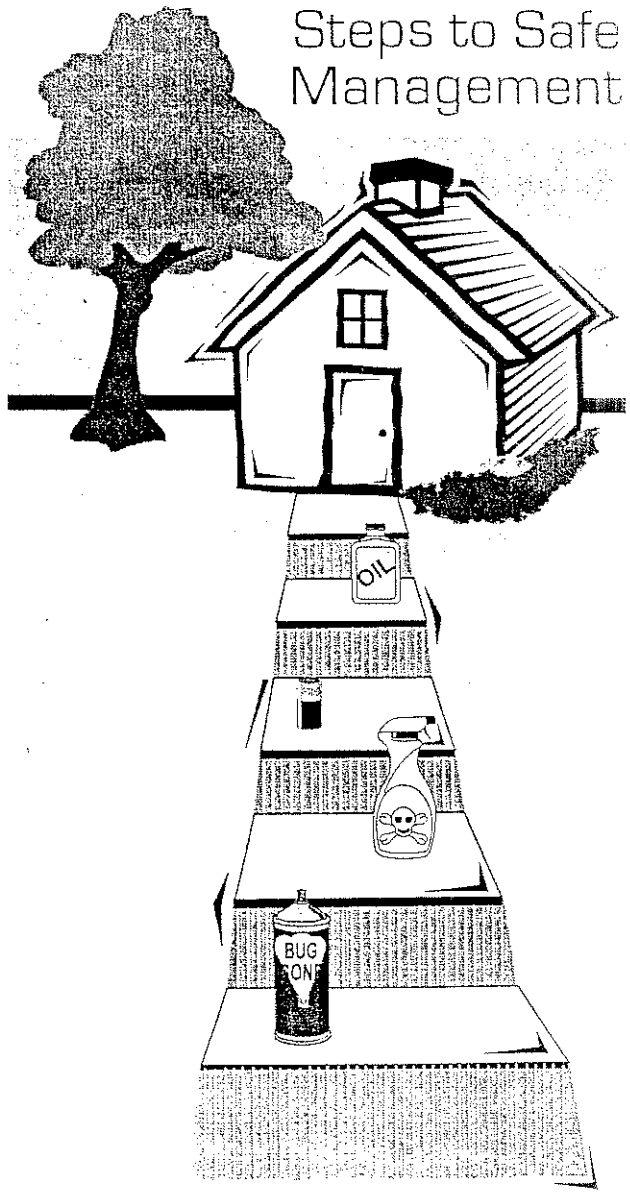
CITY OF HASTINGS SOLID WASTE DEPARTMENT
461-2308 or 463-0705

If you accidentally swallow or inhale household chemical products or spill them on your skin, call for information.

Nebraska's Poison Control Center
1 (800) 955-9119

Household Hazardous Waste

Steps to Safe Management



What is Household Hazardous Waste?

Some jobs around the home may require the use of products containing hazardous components. Such products may include certain paints, cleaners, stains and varnishes, car batteries, motor oil and pesticides. The used or leftover contents of such consumer products are known as "household hazardous waste".

Americans generate 1.5 million tons of household hazardous waste per year. The average home can accumulate as much as 100 pounds of household hazardous waste in the basement and garage and in storage sheds. When improperly disposed of household hazardous waste can result in potential risk to people and the environment. This pamphlet describes steps that people can take to reduce the amount of household hazardous waste they generate and ensure that these wastes are safely stored, handled and disposed of.

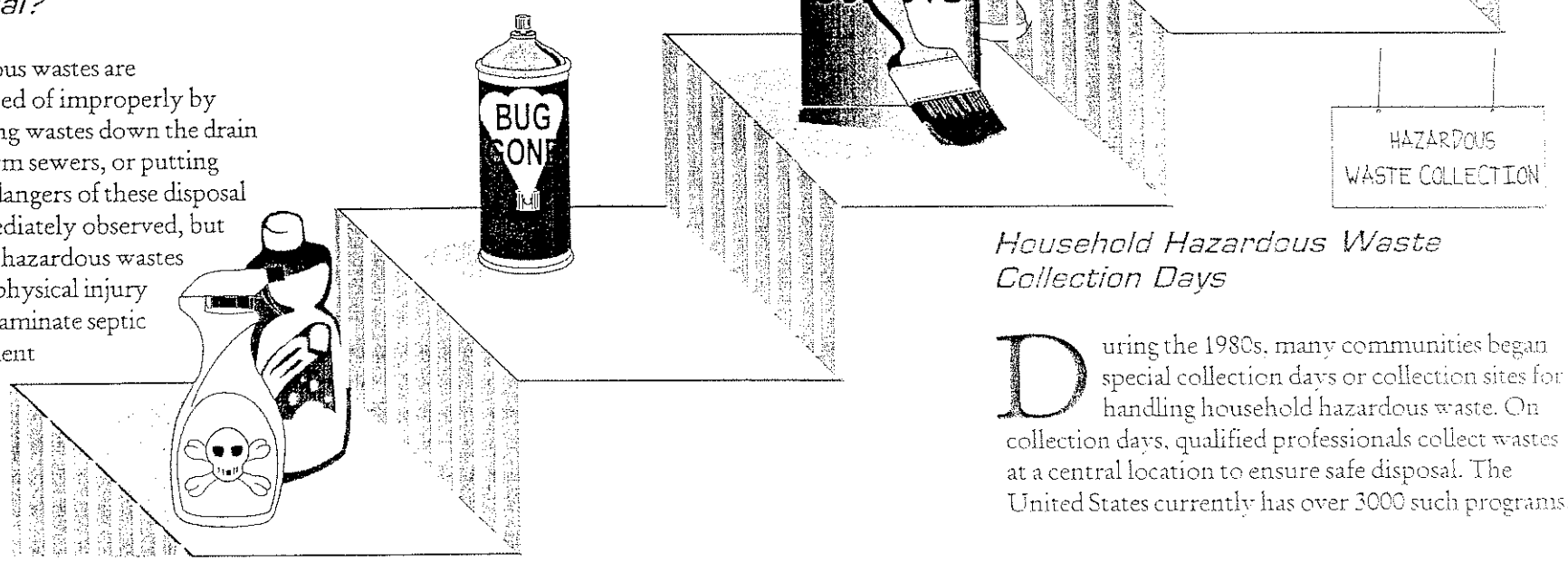
What Are the Dangers of Improper Disposal?

Household hazardous wastes are sometimes disposed of improperly by individuals pouring wastes down the drain or on the ground, into storm sewers, or putting them out with trash. The dangers of these disposal methods may not be immediately observed, but certain types of household hazardous wastes have the potential to cause physical injury to sanitation workers, contaminate septic tanks or wastewater treatment systems if poured down drains or toilets and present hazards to children and pets if left around the house.

While households do not have to separate household hazardous waste from trash under federal law, some states have special requirements. Call local or state solid waste officials to learn what requirements apply to households or small businesses in your area.

Reduce and Recycle

One way to reduce the potential problems associated with household hazardous wastes is to use nonhazardous or less hazardous products to accomplish the task at hand. Individuals can do this by reducing the amount and/or toxicity of the products they choose. This can include learning about the toxicity of products and about appropriate alternatives to household items containing hazardous substances. If you use products with hazardous components, use only the amount needed. Leftover materials can be shared with neighbors or donated to a business, charity or government agency, or given to a household hazardous waste collection program.



Recycling is an economical and environmentally sound way to handle some types of household hazardous waste, such as used automobile batteries and oil. Auto parts stores and service stations frequently accept used automobile batteries and 80 per cent of these batteries are currently recycled. Many states are drafting legislation requiring used oil recycling. Many service stations in Grand Island have begun collecting used oil as a service to their customers and community. Check with local solid waste officials to find a used oil recycling location in your area.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days

During the 1980s, many communities began special collection days or collection sites for handling household hazardous waste. On collection days, qualified professionals collect wastes at a central location to ensure safe disposal. The United States currently has over 3000 such programs.