

# Household Hazardous Waste

Information for residents and property owners from  
Fort Wayne City Utilities



## What is Household Hazardous Waste?

Unused and unwanted household products that contain corrosive, toxic, or reactive ingredients are considered to be household hazardous waste or HHW. These items may be found in basements, under the kitchen sink or in dark corners in the garage. They contain hazardous ingredients that are safe to use when you follow the manufacturer's instructions, but they require special care and handling when you dispose of them.



The average home in Indiana contains between three and ten gallons of hazardous waste. If this waste is not disposed of properly, it could contaminate rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater, and harm people and animals.

Household hazardous wastes fall into one of four categories that will be noted on the container:

**Flammable** - Ignites easily and burns rapidly.

**Corrosive** - May cause deterioration of bodily tissues (burns) or material at the site of contact.

**Explosive** - Contents may explode if incinerated or stored above 82° F.

**Toxic/Poison** - Harmful or deadly upon contact, ingestion or inhalation.



## What's in YOUR Home?

These are some of the household hazardous wastes found in homes:

**In the kitchen:** Floor care products; furniture polish; metal polish; oven cleaner; drain cleaner; window cleaner.

**In the garage:** Antifreeze; brake fluid; car wax with solvent; diesel fuel; gasoline; kerosene; motor oil; transmission fluid; windshield washer solution; fiberglass epoxy; lighter fluid.

**For the garden:** Weed killer; pesticides including rat/mouse/gopher poison; insecticide; fungicide; fertilizer.

**In the workshop:** Oil-based paint; automotive paint;

solvents including paint stripper and paint thinner; paint brush cleaner containing solvents such as trisodium phosphate; solvent-based glue; mineral spirits; primer; rust remover; turpentine; varnish; wood preservative/stain.

**Here & There:** Dry-cleaning solvent; gun cleaning solvent; moth balls; unmixed photo developing chemicals; septic tank degreaser; swimming pool chemicals.

**In the bathroom:** Toilet cleaner; nail polish; nail polish remover.

Looking for safer alternatives to these hazardous chemicals that work just as well? See back of flyer.

## Getting Rid of HHW

Now that you can identify household hazardous waste around the house, what's next? The most important thing you can do is properly dispose of the chemicals and their containers. The Allen County Environmental Management Department collects household hazardous waste every Tuesday. Just take household chemicals in their original containers to:

**Tox-Away Tuesday 2260 Carroll Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46818** (please enter via Fort Recovery Rd. from Lima Rd.)

Drop-off hours: **Tuesdays from 9 AM—2 PM** Minimal fees apply and there is a weight limit of 50 pounds

**For a map to the drop-off location and more about materials that are accepted, please go to [acwastewatcher.org](http://acwastewatcher.org).**

## Bulbs, Batteries, Thermometers, Etc.

Fluorescent light bulbs, thermometers, old thermostats, switches, batteries, and some household electronics contain mercury. Mercury is a concern because it is an element that does not break down. It can be a significant source of air and water pollution if not removed and recycled properly, and just a few drops can contaminate a lake or stream. Mercury is a toxin that may cause brain and nervous system problems and is especially dangerous for women who are pregnant and their unborn babies. It accumulates in fish tissues, and many states have issued advisories suggesting that certain fish should only be eaten in moderate amounts.

While some mercury occurs naturally, most mercury pollution is the result of human activity including improper disposal of mercury-containing items. There are disposal sites for mercury-containing items in Allen County and most items can be dropped off at no cost.

**Fluorescent light tubes and compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs):** These contain small amounts of mercury and should never be disposed of with garbage or recycling. Connolly's and Umber's Do It Best stores in Fort Wayne and Allen County will accept CFLs and fluorescent bulbs

up to 8-feet long during regular store hours. Only residential bulbs are accepted, and stores may limit the number of bulbs they will accept. Batteries + Bulbs stores will accept fluorescent tubes, CFLs and batteries or items may be dropped off at the Allen County Environmental Management Department's Tox-Away Tuesdays.

**Batteries:** Connolly's and Umber's Do It Best stores and Batteries + Bulbs will accept non-rechargeable household batteries at no cost. The number of batteries that can be dropped off at one time may be limited. Batteries may also be taken to Tox-Away Tuesdays.

**Mercury-Containing Thermometers:** Due to the highly toxic nature of mercury and the likelihood of breaking, old thermometers should not be put into the trash or recycling. They can be dropped off at the Allen County Department of Health (ACDH) at 200 E. Berry Street, Suite 360 or at the ACDH Medical Annex at 4813 New Haven Avenue.

**Electronic Equipment:** Electronics often contain metals that should be recycled. Electronic equipment may be dropped off at OmniSource, 1430 Meyer Road—Gate 1. Residents may drop-off up to five items.

### Helpful Websites

<https://www.cityoffortwayne.org/pollution-prevention.html> Information from City Utilities on ways to protect water quality through pollution prevention

<http://www.acwastewatcher.org> Information on identifying and properly disposing of household hazardous waste

[www.connollysdoitbest.com](http://www.connollysdoitbest.com) Information on store locations and hours

<https://umbers.doitbest.com/> Information on store locations and hours

<https://www.batteriesplus.com/t/recycling> Information on what stores will accept for recycling, locations, hours

### Safer Alternatives

You can avoid having some hazardous chemicals around the house by using less toxic and more natural products. Here are a few safer replacements for household products you may use regularly:

**Wood Furniture Polish:** Combine one part lemon juice with two parts olive oil and rub on furniture with a soft, clean cloth.

**Window Cleaner:** Mix one cup of isopropyl alcohol with one cup water and one tablespoon white vinegar in a spray bottle. Spray on windows or mirrors then wipe dry.

**Rust Remover:** Soak the rusted object in vinegar for 30 minutes then use a brush to scrub off any remaining surface rust. Rinse with water and dry.

**Drain Opener:** Pour 1/4 cup baking soda into the drain followed by 1/2 cup of vinegar. When the mixture stops fizzing, flush with boiling water.

The US Environmental Protection Agency offers more information about products that are safer for human health and the environment at [www.epa.gov/saferchoice](http://www.epa.gov/saferchoice).

