

THE Merganser

Reports on First Nations Waste Management Programs in British Columbia, Canada

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What's Under Your Sink?

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Toxic substances from certain household items may contaminate the air, water and/or soil. As a result, improper disposal at landfills, open water bodies or existing sewage systems may negatively impact people and the environment. Some household hazardous waste can be easily recognized by the hazard symbols on the bottle containers e.g. "Corrosive", "Flammable", "Poisonous", or "Explosive" (see table below).

<p>Corrosive</p> <p>Household Cleaners, Drain Cleaner, Oven Cleaners, Bleach, Automobile Batteries</p>	<p>Flammable</p> <p>Paints, Solvents, Aerosol Cans, Motor Oil, Kerosene, Camping Fuel</p>
<p>Poisonous</p> <p>Household Cleaners, Pesticides, Fertilizers, Alkaline Batteries, Antifreeze, Prescription Medicine, Pharmaceuticals</p>	<p>Explosive</p> <p>Aerosol Cans, Propane Cylinders and Tanks, Camping Fuel</p>

In order to prevent household hazardous waste from contaminating the environment, it is important to recognize the proper storage, usage, and disposal methods. Finding "green" alternatives to the hazardous products are also highly encouraged.

Storage

- Follow storage instructions on the labels
- Store chemicals in its original containers with proper labelling
- Never transfer any chemicals to a different container
- Store in lockable cabinets out of reach of children and pets

Disposal

- Separate household hazardous products from your household garbage
- Consult your Band to see the type of hazardous waste disposal program that is available in your community

Medical Waste

- For sharp objects such as needles and syringes, dispose of them in proper sharps containers that are provided by the Nursing Station
- For unused medications check with the Nursing Station for disposal



Usage

- Use up all the products or share with other households
- Only buy the amount you need
- Use only the recommended amount (*more is not better*)
- Use in well ventilated areas
- Never mix two different products together

Alternatives

- For paints and solvents, use water-based or latex paints as they do not require thinner or solvents
- Avoid aerosol products. Use pumps or spray bottles
- Baking soda: a non-abrasive scouring powder that cleans and deodorizes
- White vinegar and water: clean windows and smooth surfaces. It can also remove grease and grime
- Open blocked drains with metal snakes or plunger.