



Use, Storage and Disposal of Household Cleaning Products



Manufacturers generally provide consumers with clear and complete instructions on package labels for using, storing and disposing of household cleaning products. Take advantage of this information to help yourself make more informed decisions about purchasing, using, storing and disposing of these products.

Information you can find on product labels includes:

① *Ingredient List*

Some manufacturers include ingredient labeling on packages of their products. Where phosphate regulations exist and phosphorus is part of the formulation, the phosphorus content must be listed.

② *Directions for Use*

Household cleaning products contain directions for use. Read and follow these directions for best results and to ensure environmentally safe use of the product.

Package directions provide information on:

- How to use the product.
- Amount of product to use.
- What surfaces to use the product on and, sometimes, the surfaces it should not be used on.

③ *Caution Statements*

Government agencies may require specific label instructions for products that are *toxic, highly toxic, corrosive, flammable, extremely flammable, combustible, an irritant, or a strong sensitizer*. Regulations dictate how the product should be labeled and when the manufacturer must use the words *danger, warning* and *caution*.

Read and observe the caution statement. Some household cleaning products require strong chemicals to be effective on certain surfaces and soils. Avoid eye and skin contact with such products. Store products out of reach of small children and pets so they cannot

accidentally open a container and be harmed by touching or drinking the product. Carefully follow the precautions of the manufacturer in using the product.

Manufacturers generally warn against mixing different products. Even though you have used household cleaning products for many years, some precautions should be observed when using them. Household cleaning products should never be mixed together. For example, avoid mixing products containing chlorine bleach with products containing ammonia or acids. These mixtures can release hazardous chloramine or chlorine gas. Wear protective gloves whenever recommended on the label.

Manufacturers of household cleaning products can assure consumers that their products are effective and safe when used according to the directions, but they cannot prevent injury if the consumer ignores instructions and warnings on the label. Read and follow label instructions for all products.

④ *Storage of Household Products*

Follow these steps to preserve effectiveness and maintain the strength of household cleaning products:

- Open packages according to directions.
- Close packages after each use to preserve the product, to prevent spillage, and to minimize moisture absorption by granular products.
- Store products in a cool dry place.
- Store household cleaning products in the containers in which they were purchased. Don't remove products from their original containers or store them in unlabeled containers that lack the caution statements that appear on the original product labels.

Many types of household cleaning products have an unlimited shelf life. Others, particularly those containing chlorine compounds, lose their effectiveness with time. For these products, the most desirable storage temperature range is between 50°F and 70°F. Some products provide specific shelf life recommendations.



Barnstable County
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS PROGRAM
Collaborating with the University of Massachusetts Extension
800-319-2783 508-375-6699

Cape Cod Cooperative Extension: Barnstable County, UMass Extension, and USDA cooperating.

5 Name and Address of the Manufacturer

The name and address of the manufacturer and/or a toll free number are included so you may contact the manufacturer for help with questions or problems relating to use of the product.

6 Disposal of Household Cleaning Products

DON'T dispose of household cleaning products. If you cannot use up the product, think of someone who can. A neighbor, school, youth group, church or service organization may be glad to share your unused cleaning products. When you shop, buy only the products you need, and purchase these products in quantities you will use up.

Just as you exercise care in using and storing household cleaning products, you can properly dispose of empty containers or small amounts of leftover products by following some simple procedures. Some household products can be disposed at municipal transfer stations and recycling facilities. Check the container for special instructions for disposal, then:

- SAVE FOR COLLECTION at local recycling centers or household hazardous waste collection days when possible.
- SECURE THE CAP. This will protect children, pets and trash handlers and prevent accidental mixtures that may be hazardous.
- DO NOT MIX WASTES. This could create a violent reaction or form a more hazardous product.
- WRAP the container in newspaper and/or plastic as an extra precaution.
- DO NOT put liquid waste in the trash.
- DO NOT discard large quantities of household waste at one time.



Barnstable County offers education and assistance to individuals, towns and small businesses to help them reduce the amounts of hazardous materials they use, store, and dispose of on Cape Cod.

For more information about identifying, storing, and disposing of household hazardous waste, contact:

**Barnstable County
Hazardous Materials Program
1-800-319-2783 • 508-375-6699**

Special Considerations

- Some product labels suggest rinsing the container with water before disposing. Others, such as granular drain cleaners and toilet bowl cleaners, warn against adding water to the container.
- Check disinfectant and sanitizer labels for special disposal instructions.
- Discard only completely empty aerosol containers.
- Don't reuse empty household cleaning product containers for other purposes. Label instructions and precautions for one product may be dangerous to someone using those instructions for a different product.
- Don't pour leftover household chemicals into drains or toilets unless this is their intended purpose. The chemicals may damage plumbing or septic tanks.
- Get the most for your money. USE UP THE PRODUCT. If you find you cannot use all of the product you purchased, give it to a friend, but make sure the label with directions and precautions is intact.