

Hiawatha CARE Project: Fact Sheet

Issue: Household Hazardous Waste



Why is Household Hazardous Waste Important?

Many use household hazardous products every day for cleaning and fixing homes, maintaining cars, and taking care of lawns. Household hazardous wastes and problem materials are unwanted household materials that are flammable, an oxidizer, corrosive, toxic, reactive, or contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Household hazardous waste and problem materials include automotive products, electronics, household products, lawn and garden products, personal care products, major appliances, mercury-containing products, and tires

These products have a wide variety of uses in households, but they can harm human health and the environment if used, stored or disposed of improperly.

How Does Household Hazardous Waste Affect Us Locally?

Improper disposal of household hazardous waste – such as throwing it in the trash or pouring it down the drain, onto the ground or into storm sewers – could harm families, damage property, harm trash haulers or pollute the air, water, and soil.

To address the hazardous waste disposal issue, Hennepin County provides drop-off facilities and organizes collection events where residents can properly dispose of household hazardous wastes.

Health Impacts

- Only a small fraction of the more than 75,000 registered chemicals have gone through complete testing for human health concerns. (EPA) Some chemicals have immediate toxic effects. Others are toxic only after repeated, long-term exposure.
- Children are especially susceptible to the negative effects of chemicals. When they play, they crawl and put things in their mouths. Because children's bodies are still developing, they may process these pollutants differently from adults.
- Some household hazardous wastes and problem materials contain heavy metals, such as cadmium, lead and mercury. Exposure to heavy metals can cause serious health problems including cancers and reproductive and behavioral diseases.

Environmental Impacts

- Improper disposal of household hazardous wastes can pollute the land, air or water and harm wildlife.
- Mercury in the environment can accumulate in the flesh of fish, making them unsafe to eat.
- Lead, which is commonly used in fishing jigs and sinkers, has an adverse effect on the nervous and reproductive systems of mammals and birds, and is poisoning wildlife such as loons and eagles.
- One gallon of improperly disposed motor oil can contaminate 1 million gallons of fresh water.

Financial Impacts

- Improper disposal of hazardous waste may lead to pollution of land, air or water, which can contribute to future remediation costs.

Hiawatha CARE Project Partners

Alexander's Import Auto Repair	Hennepin County	Minnesota Department of Health
American Lung Association of Minnesota	Hennepin - University Partnership	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Blue Construction	Little Earth of United Tribes	Mississippi Watershed Management Org.
City of Minneapolis	Longfellow Business Association	Preventing Harm Minnesota
East Phillips Improvement Coalition	Longfellow Community Council	St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church
Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota	Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church & Longfellow Lutheran parishes	US Environmental Protection Agency
Gardening Matters	Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Women's Environmental Institute

Hiawatha CARE Project - A project of Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works

What Can Individuals Do?

- Learn how to identify hazardous products and purchase the least hazardous products. (see [Household Hazardous Waste and Problem Materials Guide](#) and [How to Identify Hazardous Products – Read the Label](#))
- Reduce the amount of hazardous chemicals in your home. (see [Ways to Reduce Harmful Chemicals in Your Home](#))
- Safely store hazardous products (see [How to Identify Hazardous Products – Read the Label](#))
- Properly dispose of household hazardous waste at Hennepin County Drop-off Facilities (www.hennepin.us/dropoffs) or community collection events (www.hennepin.us/collectionevents).
- Dispose of batteries and electronics through the City of Minneapolis curbside recycling program (www.minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste).
- Visit the Hennepin A to Z How-to-Get-Rid-of-It Guide for disposal information for a wide variety of household products – www.hennepin.us/atozdisposalguide.



For More Information

City of Minneapolis,
www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste

Hennepin County,
www.hennepin.us/environment,
www.hennepin.us/dropoffs,
www.hennepin.us/atozdisposalguide

Rethink Recycling,
www.rethinkrecycling.com

[Household Hazardous Waste and Problem Materials Guide](#)

[How to Identify Hazardous Products – Read the Label](#)

Photo - Hennepin County Environmental Services

What Can the Community Do?

- Increase education household hazardous wastes and disposal options.
- Support businesses that have takeback programs for hazardous wastes, such as fluorescent lamps and electronic waste.

What Can the City, County, and State Do?

- Support policies to ensure that those who design, manufacture, sell, and use consumer products share responsibility for reducing health and environmental impacts of those products.

What Are Household Hazardous Wastes?

- Automotive products: automotive fluids, lead-acid batteries and oil filters
- Electronics: Audio equipment, computers and peripherals, telephones, televisions and video equipment
- Household, lawn and garden products: Adhesives, aerosols, batteries, cleaners, fire extinguishers, paint, pesticides, poisons, pool chemicals, stains and varnishes
- Personal care products: Nail polish, hair spray, perfume
- Major appliances
- Mercury-containing products: Fluorescent light bulbs, thermometers, thermostats
- Tires

What is the CARE Project?

The Hiawatha CARE Project is a new effort to address environmental toxins in western Longfellow and East Phillips. The project brings together two dozen business, community, government, and non-profit agencies in a community-

driven effort to identify, prioritize, and address environmental risks in the area.

The project was initiated in December 2010 when Hennepin County received a \$100,000 Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) award from the

US Environmental Protection Agency. The CARE program supports local collaborations to reduce toxins in the local community.

More Information:

www.minnehaha-hiawatha.com/care
612.348.9344.