

# SAFETY FIRST.

## 5 tips for storing household hazardous waste

Many of us have leftover household hazardous waste (HHW) products at home, whether it's rust remover from your latest up-cycling project, or the weed killer you used to get your flowerbeds looking their best. When your project is over, it's important to store leftover material safely.

Follow these five easy steps to ensure you get the most out of your HHW products, while keeping you and your family safe until you're ready to recycle.

### WHAT IS HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE?

Household hazardous waste, often abbreviated to HHW, is a term used to describe a broad range of items, including flammables, gasoline, pesticides, toxics, corrosives and other potentially hazardous products. These materials can be helpful in our everyday life and pose little risk if used and stored properly. However, when their useful life is over, it's critical that they are collected and disposed of responsibly, so they do not contaminate water and landfills or endanger human health.

### 1. HIGH AND DRY

It's best to store your leftover HHW products in a dry, secure, indoor area such as a shed, garage or high up on a shelf in your home. By keeping the container out of the way, it's less likely to be damaged, which can lead to accidental spills.

If you have children or pets in your home, it's even more important to keep your containers somewhere out-of-reach from prying hands or paws. Make sure to tightly seal containers after each use.

### 2. VAMPIRES KNOW BEST

Avoid storing your HHW leftovers in direct sunlight. Too much sunlight could damage their integrity, leading to the contents spoiling sooner than necessary. Keeping them somewhere shady ensures the product itself—along with the container and label—remain in good condition.

Taking this simple precaution is essential should you eventually need to recycle these products—only products in their original, undamaged containers, with intact labels are accepted for recycling.

### 3. SAY NO TO DRAINS

It can be tempting to head to the sink when you have only *a little* product left—especially when we are used to rinsing and recycling other plastic containers we use around the home. But resist the urge when it comes to hazardous product. When leftover HHW is dumped down the drain, it can end up harming our groundwater and other sensitive habitat.

Instead, set leftover product aside with other recyclables that aren't collected at the curb, and take them to a recycling event or facility near you.



#### 4. THE NAME GAME

If the label comes off your HHW container, do your best to glue or tape it back on, as soon as possible.

Recycling handlers identify and sort all HHW product that comes into their facility, to ensure chemical ingredients do not negatively interact. If they can't identify what's in the container, it makes responsible end-of-life management difficult.

#### 5. ANTI-SOCIAL CONTAINERS

Products containing bleach are perfectly safe to use, as long as you follow their usage instructions. As the label likely indicates, to avoid causing any

unwanted chemical reactions, you should never mix bleach products with anything other than plain water. In fact, the safest option is to keep them away from all other chemicals, even when they're being stored. If you're unsure, check the label—many products will indicate if they contain bleach. Yet another reason why it's important to keep those labels on!

When you're ready to return leftover material or empty containers for recycling, visit [productcare.org/products/hhw/](https://productcare.org/products/hhw/) to check which materials are accepted and to find a recycling facility or event near you.



For over 30 years, Product Care Recycling has been managing the end-of-life of household products that are found in homes across Canada. A federally registered not-for-profit, we work with over 2,600 collection sites to ensure paint, household hazardous materials, lights, and alarms are responsibly recycled. To learn more about our programs or to find a recycling location near you, visit [productcare.org](https://productcare.org).