



Pollution Prevention Begins At Home

Pollution Prevention Begins At Home

All of us contribute to groundwater pollution through our daily activities. Fertilizers and pesticides run off lawns with rainwater. Motor oil washes off driveways and streets into storm sewers. Together, these small sources of pollution add up to make one of the nation's leading sources of pollution - **Non-point Source Pollution**. There are several things you can do as a homeowner to make your home maintenance more environmentally friendly. By practicing these simple suggestions, you can help make your community cleaner and safer.

Around the House--

Read the label before you buy, and purchase the least toxic substance possible for the job at hand. Buy only the amount necessary to do the job. Look for these signal words:



Poison/ Danger	Highly Toxic	A few drops to one teaspoon will kill an average person
Warning	Moderately Toxic	One teaspoon to one ounce will kill and average person
Caution	Slightly Toxic	Requires more than one ounce to kill an average person

Store it safely - Keep hazardous substances out of reach of children and pets, make sure lids are tightly capped and sealed, keep away from heat or sparks, and in the original containers. Never store hazardous materials in food or beverage containers.

Use it safely - Read all labels carefully before using and follow all directions. Use the proper safety equipment when working with hazardous chemicals, and wear protective gloves, clothing, and eye glasses. Prevent inhalation, ingestion, and skin absorption.

Dispose of it safely - Reuse/Recycle is the preferred option whenever possible. While many items may be safely disposed of in the trash, others must be disposed of at HazBin. Never pour a material out onto the ground. Ask yourself, "Do I want to drink this?"

Car Care—



- ◆ Take your used motor oil and antifreeze to a recycling center.
- ◆ Clean up any leaks or spills of antifreeze, motor oil, or other car chemicals thoroughly. You can put kitty litter on the spill and sweep the damp litter into a plastic bag, label it, and dispose of it in the trash. Be sure to clean the bristles of the broom after use, and properly dispose of the paper towels in a sealed plastic bag. Or you can use paper towels or rags to soak up the spill, place the rags or used towels in a sealed plastic container and dispose of them in the trash.

Vehicle Washing--

When you wash your vehicle, the wash water contains oil, grease, metal paint chips, phosphates, detergents, soaps, cleaners, road salts, and other debris. These chemicals can contaminate the groundwater or the surface water when they are allowed to enter storm drains or directly enter the ground water through 'pit' or 'dry well' septic systems, unused wells, or even the foundations of your home.



- ◆ Wash vehicles on your lawn, so that the vegetation (grass, etc.) can filter the wash water before it enters storm drains, storm drainage ditches, or the groundwater.
- ◆ Make sure that the location you select for washing is not located on your septic lateral system, and drains away from your house, your 'pit' or 'dry well' septic system, or any unused wells on your property.
- ◆ Check the drainage of the area before you wash your vehicle, by running the hose over the area and washing the runoff. If the runoff goes into a drainage ditch or a storm drain, place a large, flat pan (like a broiling pan) for the water to drain into, to allow solids to fall out of the water before it is transported downstream. Clean out the pan with paper towels, put the paper towels in a sealed plastic bag, and place the bag in the regular trash.
- ◆ Use a biodegradable soap, and more environmentally friendly products where at all possible, to keep from killing the grass, or contributing to groundwater contamination.
- ◆ Watch the grass after you have washed your vehicle. If the products you are using kill or damage the grass, look for more environmentally friendly, biodegradable products.

Lawn & Garden--

If you use a lawn service, ask them to use environmentally friendly products, or switch to a company that does. If you take care of your lawn yourself:

- ◆ Use fertilizers and pesticides only as needed, and as per directions. Do not heavily water the lawn after an application. Check to make sure that rain is not forecast before you apply.
- ◆ Leave grass clippings on the lawn to serve as a natural fertilizer or compost them with other yard wastes.
- ◆ Lawns should be 2-4 inches in height. Cutting the lawn too short or too frequently weakens the grass and allows weeds to grow faster.
- ◆ Consult your local nursery for advice on selecting native plants for your home's site characteristics.
- ◆ Don't allow abandoned cars, appliances, lawn equipment, or other equipment to sit unused on your property.
- ◆ Always wear protective clothing when applying pesticides or other hazardous materials to your yard or in your home.
- ◆ Store any leftover materials in their original, labeled containers. Dispose of these according to directions.



Home Medical Wastes--

Home medical wastes can infect other people who come in contact with the trash. All home medical supplies should be stored away from children and pets. Antibiotics poured down the drain can kill bacteria in your septic system that is needed for microbial action. See the US Food & Drug Administration website for disposal guidelines: <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm>

Place disposable sheets, medical gloves, and soiled bandages in plastic bags and securely fasten before putting them in the trash. Sharps should be placed in a tightly sealed, plastic container, and placed in the trash destined for a landfill.

Smoke Detectors--

Certain kinds of smoke detectors contain a radioactive sensing device, but the radioactivity is so low, it is considered harmless. Before you throw out an old smoke detector, remove the old battery, and make sure the trash is destined for a landfill.

Fluorescent Lamps--



Fluorescent lamps, including the energy saving compact fluorescents, contain mercury. When a lamp breaks, it releases mercury into the air, which is toxic to the human nervous system and to wildlife.

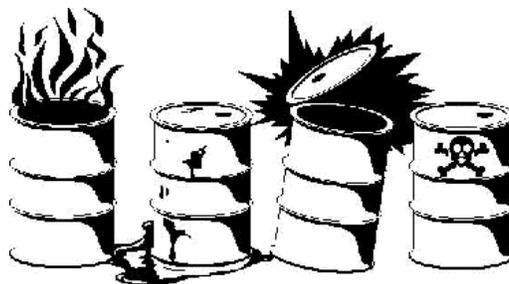
- ◆ If a lamp breaks in your home, immediately have people and pets leave the room.
- ◆ Air out the room for 5-10 minutes by opening a window or door to the outdoor environment. Be sure to turn off central heating/air systems.
- ◆ Carefully scoop up any mercury using flexible cardboard or paper, sticky tape and damp disposable towels and put into a glass jar, and tightly cap it. Label the jar. Wrap the glass shards from the lamp in a cardboard box, and seal in plastic.
- ◆ Take the broken lamp to HazBin, or save them for a Hazardous Waste Collection Day.

Oh No... What do I do with this barrel?

You have inherited a drum of mysterious content when you purchased your property; you have found a container dumped in a seldom-used area of your property; or someone 'gave' you a little gift by dumping a drum on your property in the middle of the night. **What do you do?**

First—avoid the inclination to do nothing, or to dump it on someone else's property. Two wrongs don't make a right! Secondly, remember that many substances can explode, catch on fire, or are toxic in very small amounts. Extinguish all cigarettes, wear safety goggles and rubber gloves, and carefully examine the drum from a safe distance.

- ◆ **Is it leaking?** If the container is leaking, avoid all contact with any materials leaving the drum. Keep children, pets, and other animals away from the materials. Call the Louisville Field Office of the KY Department for Environmental Protection (DEP), (502-429-7120). Explain the situation, and they will send out an inspector to help you. OR, you may call the local Fire Department for help.



- ◆ **Is it labeled?** Without touching the barrel, or any products that may be leaking from the barrel, write everything down that you can read on the label before you call. The DEP may be able to research the material to help you determine what type of chemical you have, and will be able to tell you how to properly dispose of the material.
- ◆ **It isn't leaking and there is no label.** Call the Fire Department; explain the situation; and ask them to conduct an investigation. Or, you may call the DEP and ask them to conduct an investigation. Don't call 911 as this is not an emergency. You can call [311 MetroCall](#), for information on how to contact your nearest Fire Department, without sounding an emergency.
- ◆ **How to avoid the problem in the future.** You can't do anything about the 'gift' of a barrel of waste in the middle of the night, but you can avoid creating a mystery barrel problem for yourself in the future.

1. Keep hazardous wastes separated. Even a small amount of a hazardous substance mixed with non-hazardous waste can make the entire waste stream hazardous and create an expensive disposal problem.
2. Keep the containers of segregated wastes labeled and keep the Material Safety Data Sheets for the product the waste comes from on hand.
3. Substitute non-hazardous products for hazardous ones, and eliminate the hazardous waste disposal problem entirely. For example, use latex paints instead of oil based enamels, or use soap and water instead of a chemical solvent.
4. You can report illegal dumping by calling: MetroCALL 311 or 574-5000 (see below).
5. Be sure to report all spills and leaks to the Louisville Field Office of the DEP at 502-429-7120.

More about Illegal Dumping

Once dumping has occurred, the solution is a combination of government and citizen action. Metro Solid Waste Management Department will remove debris dumped on Metro owned properties, such as parks or facilities, or in public right-of-ways. Illegal dumping on private property or on easements adjoining private properties becomes the responsibility of the owner to remove.

If you see illegal dumping in progress, you can call the Louisville Metro Police Department (574-7060) to report the location and description of the persons and vehicle doing the dumping. If the dumping has already occurred, you can call MetroCALL at 574-5000 or 311. A determination will be made on whether the cleanup should be done by Metro Government or the property owner.

De-Icers

Did you know that as much as 50% of all road salts and sidewalk de-icers used enter the groundwater? While all of us need some protection from ice and snow on our walking surfaces, we can take precautions to minimize the danger to the environment.

- ◆ Use an alternative to salt. Although slower working than conventional road salt, calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), liquid calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, and potassium acetate, reduce corrosivity and reduce the impact on the environment. Sand is also a good substitute for salt on driveways, walkways, and porches. Don't over-treat the area!
- ◆ Seed and fertilize, seed and mulch, or replace sod in vegetated area damaged by salt use.
- ◆ Lower pesticide and herbicide use in areas that are usually effected by salt use, such as along roadways, driveways, sidewalks, and porches.
- ◆ Collect and remove road debris.
- ◆ Store salt and other de-icing materials inside, to prevent loss of the product from precipitation.
- ◆ Maintain retaining walls and pavements to minimize cracks and leakage.
- ◆ Don't dump accumulated snow into surface waters.
- ◆ Contact your local and state governments about using salt alternatives on roads in the winter.

Remember-- Pollution Prevention Begins at Home!



A publication of the Louisville Water Company
Wellhead Protection Plan - Local Planning Team, Public Education