

Ways to Remove Hazardous Household Wastes - Safely

By Craig McGuire

With the advent of recycling, most New Yorkers have become more conscious of the practice and procedure of disposing of their trash. But when it comes to household hazardous waste, you can never be too careful.

Hazardous household waste includes products which are inflammable, corrosive, reactive, or poisonous. Consumers should check labels for the words like danger, warning, cau-

tion, and poison, which may appear on certain household products.

When household hazardous waste, which includes everything from kitchen and bathroom cleaners to pesticides, is poured down the drain, it can pollute the ground, air, and water. It can also injure children, pets, and sanitation workers, as well as cause property damage and create a fire hazard.

Recycling experts agree, risks to your family and the

environment can be minimized by reducing the number of hazardous products you buy, substituting non-toxic products whenever possible, and properly disposing of hazardous waste.

The Sanitation Department's Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling offers New Yorkers several alternatives to purchasing hazardous household products.

For example, replace store-bought ceramic tile

cleaner with one-quarter cup white vinegar in one gallon of water. To polish your furniture, mix three parts olive oil with one part vinegar, and to clean the toilet, sprinkle baking soda into the bowl, drizzle with vinegar, and scour with a toilet brush.

The Department of Sanitation also has some homemade, non-toxic solutions to dealing with pest problems.

According to DOS literature, you can kill roaches with a mixture of equal parts flour, oatmeal, and plaster of Paris, but this mixture should be kept out of the reach of children and pets.

To control ants, you should wash your countertops, cabinets, and floors with a mixture of equal parts vinegar and water.

And you can substitute cedar blocks or chips for moth balls.

Residents should donate unwanted, usable materials, such as paint, to friends, neighbors, or community organizations rather than throw it away.

Before tossing out paint thinners, brush cleaners, or solvents, let them sit in a closed container for a few days until paint residue and other solid matter settle to the bottom. Pour off clean

liquid into a new container, seal it and label it for future use.

This spring, the DOS is offering five free household hazardous waste collection days, one in each of the five boroughs. There will also be five free collection days this fall.

For more information about household hazardous waste practice and procedures call the Sanitation Action Center at (212) 219-8090.

Any New York City resident may bring up to 20 gallons, or 100 pounds per household, to the collection sites.

Only residential hazardous waste will be accepted at the sites. Businesses and institutions must hire a licensed contractor to dispose of their waste.

Do not bring explosives, fireworks, ammunition, infectious wastes, radioactive wastes, gas cylinders, PCBs, or commercial or industrial waste.

The material will be received, packaged, and removed from the community on the day of collection by

a specially licensed company. Much of the collected material will be recycled. The rest will be sent to licensed hazardous waste treatment or disposal facilities.

The remaining collection days are Sunday, May 15 at the north end of Union Square next to 17th Street between Broadway and Park Avenue South in Manhattan, on Saturday, June 4 in the York College parking lot on 158th Street between Jamaica Avenue and Liberty Avenue in Queens, and on Saturday, June 18 at the Bronx Municipal Hospital Center parking lot on Eastchester Road between Pelham Parkway South and Morris Park Avenue, in Morris Park, the Bronx.

The Brooklyn hazardous waste collection day was May 1.

Until hazardous waste collection days, carefully collect and store your unwanted products out of the reach of children and pets.

All products should be securely closed and labeled before being discarded.

For more information about household hazardous waste practices and procedures, contact your building manager or call the Sanitation Action Center at (212) 219-8090.

Pushing the Popularity of Peddle Power

Plumbers and politicians, teachers and technicians, lawyers and landscapers -- New Yorkers of all types -- will take to the streets on two wheels from May 16 to May 20. Sponsored by Transportation Alternatives (T.A.), Bike to Work Week will showcase cycling's advantages while helping people to overcome some of the obstacles to riding a bike to work in New York.

Bicycle commuting helps employers, too: increased punctuality, reduced travel and parking costs, decreased absenteeism through fitness and increased productivity. Of particular importance, bicycle commuting helps com-

panies comply with Clean Air Act amendments requiring businesses with 100 or more employees to reduce work-related car trips.

"Bicycle commuting can humanize our city. More cycling means cleaner air and less traffic," said Cindy Arlinsky, bicycle program director of Transportation Alternatives. "New York, flat and compact, is an ideal place to bicycle. Plus, bicycling is good for New York's economy, as is evidenced by the growing number of businesses using bicycles for deliveries."

Bike to Work Week highlights include: free bike-commuter breakfasts sponsored by local compa-

nies and officials; group rides to and from work; free bike repair, safety and fitness workshops; and Public Officials' bike ride, where you can see your favorite lawmaker on two wheels: May 16, at noon, stepping off from City Hall.

To help people overcome the obstacles to bike commuting, T.A. will host "mock-commute" rides for novices; organize neighborhood commuter groups; assist workers in gaining secure parking and wash-up facilities; and work with car garages to install bike racks.

For more information, call Transportation Alternatives at (212) 475-4600.

