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THE TOXIC FACTS

How to keep everyday products from becoming long-term health hazards

NORTHWEST OHIO, December 2004 – What do fertilizers, batteries, glue and antifreeze have in common? While many would answer that they’re in just about every home in Northwest Ohio, few would acknowledge that they’re also hazardous to your health. But a few simple changes in storage and disposal of hazardous materials can keep homes safe, save time and money, as well as protect our waterways.

Through a collaborative partnership, the *Give Water a Hand* program is educating residents of Northwest Ohio about easy, money saving ways – including hazardous waste storage and disposal practices – to conserve water and protect our streams, rivers and lakes. “Clean water benefits plants, wildlife and all who live, work and play in this area,” says Kurt Erichsen, *Give Water a Hand* Project Manager.

Items we use every day can be hazardous to all of us and our local waterways if disposed of improperly. Dumping them down sinks, storm drains, toilets, or putting them out with the trash could dramatically affect the health of our waterways and watersheds and the animals living in and around them.

Here are some simple things to remember when dealing with hazardous materials:

- If you wouldn’t drink it, don’t dump it! The improper disposal of hazardous materials can contaminate ground and surface water and jeopardize drinking water supplies.
- Use a broom, not a hose, to clean up spills. Washing toxins into the storm drain will send them untreated to the nearest river, creek or ditch.

- more -

Give Water a Hand is a cooperative education effort among the following:

Maumee RAP (419-241-9155)
Toledo Metropolitan Area Council
of Governments (419-241-9155)
Lucas County (419-213-4500)
City of Northwood (419-693-9327)
City of Oregon (419-698-7047)

Village of Haskins (419-823-1911)
Village of Holland (419-865-7104)
Village of Millbury (419-836-9671)
Village of Ottawa Hills (419-536-1111)
Village of Waterville (419-878-8100)
Village of Whitehouse (419-877-5383)

Township of Jerusalem (419-836-8921)
Township of Monclova (419-865-7862)
Township of Spencer (419-865-2883)
Township of Springfield (419-865-0239)
Township of Sylvania (419-882-0031)
Township of Washington (419-726-6621)

Township of Waterville (419-878-5176)
Ohio Environmental Education Fund
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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- Buy only the quantity you need. Don't purchase the jumbo-sized container to save money if you will not use the entire product in a timely manner, as you'll have the long term "cost" of proper household hazardous waste storage and disposal.
- Household hazardous waste should not be put in the trash. Keep our landfills free of harmful substances. It's much cheaper to put hazardous waste where it belongs than having to clean up a contaminated waterway or landfill.

Even everyday items can be hazardous. In general, household hazardous materials are ignitable, reactive, corrosive and/or toxic. You may have some in your home and not even realize it. Take a look:

- Household products – drain cleaners, mildew removers, glue, paint thinners, rechargeable batteries
- Automotive products – antifreeze, brake fluid, motor oil, cleaners, petroleum products
- Lawn and garden products – fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, pesticides

The key is to make sure all items are properly identified, preferably in the original containers, and make sure to read all handling instructions prior to usage. Remember, a few simple changes can make a big difference.

The *Give Water a Hand: You Can Make a Difference* campaign is a cooperative effort focused on educating residents of Northwest Ohio about storm water and other water quality issues. The average citizen does affect water quality and can make a positive difference. The Maumee RAP (Remedial Action Plan) and Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) are partnering with local cities, villages and townships to educate the region about improving water quality and managing water quantity.

For more information about the *Give Water a Hand* program, please call 419-241-9155 or visit us at www.MaumeeRAP.org.

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