

Keep Drains Safe from Household Hazardous Waste

By Jacquelyn Buck

Allen County Partnership for Water Quality (ACPWQ) is reminding all residents to properly dispose of household hazardous waste (HHW). Did you know that the average [Hoosier household contains between 3 to 10 gallons of hazardous waste](#)? If this waste is not disposed of properly, it can contaminate our rivers, lakes, and streams while also posing a threat to human health.

To dispose of HHW properly, one must be able to identify it. What is HHW? HHW could be anything from herbicides to batteries. To learn if the item in question is HHW, check the label. [Allen County Department of Environmental Management outlines the following labels and descriptions:](#)



This symbol identifies the content as flammable.



This image signals that the content inside may explode if incinerated or stored above 82° F.



This symbol alerts users that the product is corrosive, meaning it can cause deterioration of body tissue or erosion of materials.



This symbol identifies content as deadly if exposed to one's skin, ingested, or inhaled.



After identifying a HHW item, please dispose of it correctly. In Allen County, residents have access to Tox-Away Tuesday through the Allen County Department of Environmental Management. Tox-Away Tuesdays is a program held weekly for residents to recycle and dispose of HHW materials from their homes. For times, charges, and directions, please visit acwastewatcher.org.

Be sure that HHW is not making its way down storm drains or poured on the ground for disposal. Storm drains go straight to our rivers, which negatively affect local waterways harming wildlife and water quality. Additionally, **never** pour HHW down one's home drains. This water will go to one's septic tank or wastewater treatment systems. If it goes into one's septic tank, it can harm the microbes inside creating a system that will not work properly in the future. Should it end up at a wastewater facility, it could put the workers there in danger!

It is not hard to do the right thing. If you are ever in doubt if an item is a household hazardous waste, CHECK! Look on the back, and if you are still unsure take some time to look up the item. These small steps may seem trivial and insignificant at the time, but they are incredibly important in protecting our waterways.