



Household Hazardous Waste Program

Directory of Program Elements

HHW-1 Information and Education on Less-Toxic Alternatives for Household Products66

Problem Definition

Most household hazardous wastes are thrown in the garbage, taken to a landfill and disposed—and many people think that’s the end of the story. However, household hazardous wastes, such as paints, lawn and garden pesticides, batteries, cleaners, fertilizers—even medicines and cosmetics—can actually harm the environment. Problems arise when a landfill is not lined or not properly lined, and the hazardous wastes leach into the ground. The leachate can contaminate surface water runoff, groundwater and ultimately Puget Sound.

Incineration, another method to dispose of household hazardous wastes, does not always destroy toxic substances. It can cause contamination from rainfall or improperly disposed ash.

Another problem source is disposal in the sewage system. Many people simply pour their household hazardous wastes down the drain or toilet, where the waste gets passed to a municipal

sewage treatment plant. The Metropolitan District of King County estimates that residential households contribute 7 to 11 percent of the metals, 31 to 36 percent of the volatile organic compounds and 55 to 64 percent of the extractable organic compounds found in sewage treatment plants.

While treatment plants degrade or dilute some toxicants, others persist in sludge, evaporate into the air, or continue in suspension or solution through the treatment plant’s discharge pipe and into Puget Sound. Toxicants in sludge or in the air can enter Puget Sound through rain and surface water runoff.

Institutional Framework

In 1985, household hazardous wastes were included as moderate-risk waste under the state Hazardous Waste Management Act (RCW 70.105.220). Local governments have developed plans and have provided various options for citizens to properly dis-

What does “shall” mean?

The Action Team has determined that the actions in this plan are needed to protect and restore Puget Sound. Consistent with the importance of these actions, this plan says that appropriate implementers “shall” perform the actions. However, implementation of many of these actions is a long-term process. The Action Team’s work plans will identify the actions that need to be taken each biennium to implement this management plan. Implementation of actions in the work plans is subject to the availability of funds and public input into the decision-making processes of implementing entities. When an action is included in a biennial work plan, the Action Team expects that it will be implemented in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Puget Sound management plan, in accordance with Chapter 90.71 RCW.

2000 Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan

pose of household hazardous wastes.

The state departments of Health and Ecology, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Washington State University Cooperative Extension participate in the Urban Pesticide Initiative. This effort provides education on reducing household hazardous wastes by using non-toxic alternatives. Ecology also provides this type of information on its 1-800-RECYCLE phone line.

The *Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan* calls for more coordination between government agencies, private associations and nonprofit groups to effectively educate citizens about reducing the use of toxic materials and the proper use, storage and disposal of these substances when they are used.

Program Goal

To improve management of household hazardous waste through the provision of appropriate disposal options and through public education on proper waste disposal practices, waste reduction, alternatives to toxic substances and pesticide management.

Program Strategy

The strategy for achieving this goal is to ensure full implementation of the Hazardous Waste Management Act, including waste reduction through oil recycling and conservative use of pesticides.

HHW-1. Information and Education on Less-Toxic Alternatives for Household Products

The Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Action Team support staff shall work with local governments, Washington State University (WSU) Cooperative Extension, retailers, and groups such as the Washington Toxics Coalition and the Adopt-A-Stream Foundation to collect and make available information on less-toxic alternatives to household toxicants. Ecology and the Action Team support staff shall distribute this information through newsletters and other means of environmental education. Ecology shall continue to distribute this information through its 1-800-RECYCLE information line and its waste reduction program.

WSU Cooperative Extension shall work with the Department of Agriculture, local governments and local groups such as Tilth, the Washington Toxics Coalition, the Washington State Nurserymen's Association, the Center For Urban Horticulture and garden retailers to make information and training available that promotes targeted and proper use and disposal of pesticides as part of the implementation of local hazardous waste plans. WSU Cooperative Extension shall consult with these groups on the type of information and programs needed, and shall include these groups where possible in the development and distribution of information through a regional pesticide education program. The pesticide education program is to support implementation of local household hazardous waste plans.

Target Date: Ecology, WSU Cooperative Extension and the Action Team support staff shall continue to distribute information concerning the proper use and disposal of toxic household products and of using appropriate, less-toxic alternatives.