



Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Disposal Information

Words such as *danger*, *warning*, *caution*, *poisonous*, *corrosive*, *toxic* and *flammable* on the labels of common household products tell you these products may be harmful, even deadly, to you, to your children, to your pets, or to the environment. When these products are no longer wanted and are destined for disposal they become “*household hazardous waste*.”

Check your house, garage, storage cabinets and shed for these products – items such as batteries, cleaners and solvents, paints, used oil, car products, and pesticides. Practice safe storage and proper disposal for all of these items. You may wish to mark or label these products as a reminder to use them up and dispose of them safely. **Do not** put any of these items or materials in garbage cans or down household or storm drains.

Household hazardous wastes (HHW) should never be thrown into the trash or washed down the household or storm drains or abandoned – that is the law!

Hazardous chemicals can “pass through” wastewater treatment processes or storm drains and get discharged into the environment. This occurs because wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove hazardous chemicals from wastewater, and many storm drains flow directly to the Bay without any treatment at all. HHW thrown into the garbage can injure workers during collection or mix with other chemicals when buried in a landfill. Groundwater used for drinking or irrigation can be contaminated when waste products are poured onto or seep into the ground.

For health, safety and environmental reasons [it is illegal](#) to dispose of HHW in the garbage, sewers, down household or storm drains, and they cannot be abandoned. Pinole residents can properly dispose of household hazardous waste *free of charge* at the [West County HHW Collection Facility](#) located in Richmond.

[West County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility](#)

(FREE Disposal Facility for all types of HHW)

101 Pittsburg Avenue ([Directions & Location Information](#))

888-412-9277

Open Thursdays, Fridays & the first Saturday of the month

9:00 am - 4:00 pm*

*(closed Noon to 12:30 p.m. for lunch)

Common Items collected at the HHW collection facility:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhesives• Aerosols• Anti-freeze• Asbestos• Car batteries• Cleaners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electronic Devices• Fats, oil and grease• Fertilizers• Fluorescent lights• Household batteries• Mercury thermometers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paint• Pesticides• Photo chemicals• Poisons• Solvents & thinners• Used motor oil & filters
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Even if the products' labels do not contain the word "hazardous" they may be just as hazardous as any industrial waste.

Potential hazardous chemicals in these products can be:

- **Toxic:** Poisonous or lethal when ingested, touched or inhaled even in small quantities (rat poison, cleaning fluids, pesticides, bleach);
- **Flammable:** Ignites easily (lighter fluid, spot and paint removers);
- **Corrosive:** Eats away materials and living tissue by chemical action (oven and toilet bowl cleaners);
- **Reactive:** Creates an explosion or produces deadly vapors (bleach mixed with ammonia cleaners).

Careless use and disposal of harmful and hazardous substances contaminate our food, soil, water, and air; and seriously threaten the ecosystems on which we depend.

[Safe Alternatives to Toxic Products](#)

Recyclemore has compiled an extensive list of easy-to-do "homemade" alternatives to store bought toxic products. Visit their web site for the comprehensive list and [recipes](#).

For more information on hazardous waste and universal waste visit [CalRecycle](#) or the [California Department of Toxic Substance Control \(DTSC\)](#).

Universal Waste

State Law also makes it illegal to place in the trash ("throw away") [Universal Waste](#) items such as batteries, fluorescent lamps and compact fluorescents lights (CFLs), cellular telephones, electronic devices, TVs and monitors, computers and laptops.

Below is information on free disposal options for these items.

Fluorescent Lights, Batteries & Electronics



Fluorescent Lamps & Tubes

Fluorescent lamps and tubes contain mercury* – a harmful heavy metal. These lamps and tubes are [banned from the trash](#).

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may, for free, safely and properly dispose of any and all types of lamps and lights at the West County HHW Collection Facility, including fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), metal halide lamps, and sodium vapor lamps.

*Mercury is extremely toxic and should generally be handled with care; in cases of spills involving mercury (such as from a broken fluorescent lamp or tube) specific cleaning procedures are used to avoid toxic exposure. Use extreme caution when cleaning up a broken lamp. It can be inhaled and absorbed through the skin and mucous membranes. Mercury can cause both chronic and acute poisoning.

(FREE CFL Drop-off at Home Depot)

[Home Depot](#) also collects CFLs – At each store, customers can simply bring in any expired, unbroken CFL bulbs. CFLs in plastic bags are to be deposited into a collection receptacle located on the front end of the store near the entrance, by the Returns desk or near the exit doors inside the store.



Batteries

Batteries can contain lead, mercury, cadmium, lithium, nickel, zinc chloride and other harmful heavy metals and materials. Many of these metals are recovered in the recycling process.

Disposing of any type of battery in the garbage is illegal and batteries are [banned from the trash](#). This includes all batteries: AAA, AA, C, D, button cell, 9-volt, and all others, both

rechargeable and single use. Lead-acid batteries, such as car, motorcycle and marine batteries are also banned.

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may, for free, safely and properly dispose of any and all types of batteries at the [West County HHW Collection Facility](#).

(FREE Battery Drop-off at retail stores)

In addition to taking unwanted batteries to the HHW collection facility, residents may drop off household batteries for recycling at the many [Battery Recycling Drop-off Locations](#) throughout the city.

[Call2Recycle](#)

(FREE rechargeable battery recycling program with thousands of drop-off locations)

Rechargeable Battery Drop-off Location [Locator Web Site](#)



[Electronics](#)

Most electronic devices contain several materials (lead, mercury, copper, cadmium) that are harmful to humans and the environment. Many of these materials are common and seem safe, but if ingested, absorbed into your skin, or leached into drinking water serious and harmful health effects will result. Many electronic devices are [banned from the trash](#).

Banned Electronic Waste:

- Computer Monitors
- Televisions
- Printers
- VCRs & Stereos
- CD & DVD Players
- Cellular Telephones
- Microwave Ovens

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may, for free, safely and properly dispose of any and all types of banned electronic devices at the [West County HHW Collection Facility](#).

(FREE Drop-off at E-Waste Collection Events)

Residents may, for free, safely and properly dispose of many types of banned electronic devices at special e-waste collection events. Visit the [Earth911](#) website or your city's calendar for future events.



Mercury* Containing Items

There are devices and products that we often use that contain mercury. Mercury is harmful to humans and the environment. Many of these materials are common and seem safe, but if ingested, absorbed into your skin, or inhaled serious and harmful health effects will result. All mercury containing devices and items are [banned from the trash](#).

- **Electrical switches and relays** – These typically contain about 3.5 grams of mercury each. Mercury switches can be found in some chest freezers, pre-1972 washing machines, sump pumps, electric space heaters, clothes irons, silent light switches, automobile hood and trunk lights, and ABS brakes.
- **Thermostats that contain mercury** – There is mercury inside the sealed glass "tilt switch" of the old style thermostats (not the newer electronic kind).
- **Pilot light sensors** – Mercury-containing switches are found in some gas appliances such as stoves, ovens, clothes dryers, water heaters, furnaces, and space heaters.
- **Mercury gauges** – Some gauges, such as barometers, manometers, blood pressure, and vacuum gauges contain mercury.
- **Mercury thermometers** – Mercury thermometers typically contain about a half gram of mercury. Many health clinics, pharmacies and doctor's offices have thermometer exchange programs that will give you a new mercury-free fever thermometer in exchange for your old one.
- **Mercury-added novelties** – Examples include greeting cards that play music when opened; athletic shoes (made before 1997) with flashing lights in soles; and mercury maze games.

*Mercury is extremely toxic and should generally be handled with care; in cases of spills involving mercury (such as from a broken fluorescent lamp or tube) specific cleaning procedures are used to avoid toxic exposure. Use extreme caution when cleaning up a broken lamp. It can be inhaled and absorbed through the skin and mucous membranes. Mercury can cause both chronic and acute poisoning.

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may, for free, safely and properly dispose of any and all types of mercury containing items at the [West County HHW Collection Facility](#).



Mercury Thermometer Exchange Program

Bring your old mercury containing thermometer to the [HHW Collection Facility](#) and exchange it for a Free new digital thermometer – Compliments of the [West County Wastewater District](#). Or, bring them to Pinole's City Hall or Pinole Senior Center to exchange for a new digital thermometer.



Household Cleaners & Landscape Chemicals

There are many products found in the home, garage, shed and storage closets that are classified as HHW. (Bleach, ammonia, nail polish remover, oven cleaner, drain cleaners/openers, lighter fluids, lamp oils, pesticides, ant & roach poison, rat poison) The items are banned from the trash.

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may drop-off cleaners, chemicals and poisons for Free.



Paints & Solvents

The following are banned from the trash:

- **Latex paint** (empty and dry metal paint cans can be placed into your recycling bin);
- **Oil-based paint;**
- **Nonempty aerosol paint or solvent cans** (all nonempty aerosol cans are banned from the trash) (if completely empty, aerosol cans can be placed in your recycling bin);

- **Solvents** (includes materials such as paint thinners, finger nail polish remover, etc.)

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may drop-off paints & solvents for Free.

Automotive Products – Used Motor Oil & Filters and Antifreeze / Engine Coolant



Used Motor Oil & Filters

Used oil if improperly disposed is harmful to you, your children, wildlife and the natural environment. It is illegal and against [the law](#) to pour used oil down any drain or to throw used oil and filters in the trash.

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may drop-off used oil and filters for Free.

(FREE Curbside Collection)

Set out a full oil container and filter in bag in view of or near the curb on your scheduled oil collection day.

(FREE Oil Change Kit)

Call Richmond Sanitary Service at 510-262-7100 for a free oil change kit and to schedule a pick-up.

(FREE Used oil & filter drop-off at retail stores)

In addition to taking used oil & filters to the HHW collection facility, residents may drop-off these items off for recycling at several [Used Oil & Filter Recycling Centers](#).



Antifreeze / Engine Coolant

Antifreeze or engine coolant contains ethylene glycol has a sweet taste that if accidentally ingested can have serious and harmful effects. Symptoms of antifreeze poisoning include severe diarrhea and vomiting. Coolant containing ethylene glycol should not be disposed of in a way that will result in it being ingested by animals, because of its toxicity. Many animals like its sweet taste. As little as a teaspoonful can be fatal to a cat, and four teaspoonfuls can be dangerous to a dog.

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may drop-off used or unwanted engine coolant for Free.

Medical Waste – Pharmaceuticals & Sharps



Pharmaceuticals Disposal Program

(FREE Drop-off at HHW facility)

Residents may drop-off unwanted or old medicine & pharmaceuticals for Free.

Proper Medicine / Pharmaceuticals Disposal Made Easy

1. Keep medicine / pharmaceuticals in original container;
2. Leave the drug name intact. Black out personal information, including names, prescription numbers and doctor's name;
3. Drop-off unwanted medicine / pharmaceuticals at the [HHW Collection Facility](#) at 101 Pittsburg Ave., Richmond.

Note: no controlled substances will be accepted.

Pharmaceuticals Now Present in the Environment

Pharmaceuticals are now being detected in water and soil by scientists worldwide. A 2002 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) study found pharmaceutical and personal care product contaminants in 80 percent of 139 streams sampled in 30 states.

Pharmaceuticals enter wastewater treatment plants through either excretion or flushing of unused medications. These pharmaceuticals may not be completely degraded or removed at the wastewater treatment plant. Regardless of the level of treatment, most conventional wastewater treatment cannot effectively eliminate pharmaceutical compounds.

Concern about Pharmaceuticals in the Environment

Researchers suspect that hormones and pharmaceutical compounds in the water may be responsible for effects on wildlife including feminization of male fish, sluggish activity or reduced appetite. Short and long term human health effects are currently unknown.

In addition, pharmaceutical use in the general population is growing, so more unwanted drugs are generated and being improperly disposed and thus creating increased environmental concerns.

For more information on visit the [CalRecycle Pharmaceutical Drug Waste page](#) or the [EPA's Pharmaceuticals page](#).



[Sharps Disposal Program](#)

(FREE Drop-off program for residents that generate needles, syringes and lancets)*

Residents may drop-off “sharps” for Free at the HHW facility.

*All sharps need to be in an approved bio-hazard container.

Why You Should Be Careful with Sharps

Improper disposal of used or unwanted “sharps” (needles, syringes, lancets and other sharps items) can cause a serious injury and pose health risks to the public and waste workers. Waste workers are exposed to potential needle stick injuries and potential infection when inappropriate containers break open inside garbage trucks or sharps become exposed when sent to recycling facilities. Housekeepers and janitors may also be injured when loose sharps poke through trash bags. Used needles can also cause painful infections and transmit serious diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis.

The Law

Beginning on September 1, 2008, [State law](#) made it illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste in the trash or recycling containers, and requires that all sharps waste be transported to a collection center in an approved bio-hazard sharps container.

The California Health and Safety Code defines "home-generated sharps waste" as hypodermic needles, pen needles, intravenous needles, lancets, and other devices that are used to penetrate the skin for the delivery of medications derived from a household, including a multifamily residence or household.



Do the Right Thing ~ It's as Easy as Saying "1-2-3"

1. Call 1-888-412-9277 and request a *FREE* sharps collection container – it will be mailed to you at no cost;
2. Place your used or unwanted "sharps" in the collection container then drop-off the full container at the [HHW Collection Facility](#) at 101 Pittsburg Ave., Richmond;
3. Pick-up a new replacement sharps collection container while at the HHW Collection Facility.



Door to Door [Mobile HHW Collection Program](#)

(FREE Home collection service)

Free HHW pickup services are available for residents age 60 or older and persons with disabilities through the West Contra Costa County [HHW Mobile Collection Program](#) ([Información Sobre la Recogida Móvil](#)). Call 888-412-9277 for an appointment.



Business Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Businesses generating less than 27 gallons or 222 pounds of hazardous waste per month may participate in the Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator Program (CESQG). Fees are based on cost of material disposal. For more information or an appointment at the HHW Collection Facility call 888-412-9277.

