



TOO TOXIC TO TRASH

Your Guide To Household Hazardous Waste



By San Mateo County Environmental Health Services
Household Hazardous Waste Program



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
**ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES**

WHAT IS HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) consists of items that are used in and around the home that can be harmful or dangerous to humans, animals, and the environment if used or stored improperly. They may be toxic, corrosive, flammable, or reactive based on their chemical properties.

Products such as batteries, paint and paint thinner, pesticides, fertilizers, and poisons can be found in many areas of your home, such as under the kitchen and bathroom sinks or in the carport/garage. Look for warning labels (caution, warning, danger, poison, flammable, toxic, corrosive, or oxidizer) on the container.

It's illegal and unsafe to dump HHW in the trash or down the drain. In this toolkit you will learn about the many easy and free ways to safely remove these items from your home.

COMMON HHW ITEMS IN YOUR HOME

The top three most generated HHW items in San Mateo County are **paint, single-use and rechargeable batteries (such as AAA, AA, C, button cell, 9-volt, and lithium-ion batteries), and fluorescent lights**. The list below focuses on common HHW items that may be found in your home. Keep in mind that it is not exhaustive; [see the full list of items here](#).



- Paint
- Batteries
- Fluorescent lights
- Household cleaners
- Used motor oil and filters
- Aerosol cans
- Art and hobby supplies (photo chemicals, glues)
- Automotive supplies (car batteries, motor oil, antifreeze, brake fluid, gasoline, fuel additives, chrome polish, many waxes)
- Cosmetics (nail polish, nail polish remover, perfumes, etc.)
- Methyl-acetylene and Propadiene (MAPP) cylinders only
- Fire extinguishers
- Garden fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides
- Mercury-containing thermometers and thermostats
- Poisons (pest killing products such as herbicides, pesticides, and rodenticides, powders, sprays, baits)
- Pool and spa chemicals
- Propane tanks and outdoor cooking fluids (lighter fluid, camp stove fuel, tanks for gas grills), maximum 5-gallon size



WHY THESE ITEMS ARE HAZARDOUS

The list below focuses on why some of these common HHW items found in your home are hazardous. You can dispose of the additional items below by [making an appointment](#) at one of the HHW Drop-off Events scheduled in various cities in San Mateo County.



PAINT

Paints are hazardous because they contain heavy metals like chromium, lead, and zinc in their pigments. Specialty coatings such as urethanes, epoxy, and resins are hazardous in liquid form due to the toxicity of uncured resins and epoxies. To learn more visit the [CA Dept. of Toxic Substances Control](#).



BATTERIES

Batteries can corrode and allow harmful chemicals to leach into the soil and make their way into our water supply. Chemicals in batteries can cause everything from serious skin irritation to cancer. To learn more visit [RethinkWaste.org](#)



FLUORESCENT LIGHTS

All fluorescent lights contain mercury sealed within the glass tubing. This means the lights are toxic and can't be put in the trash. Broken fluorescent lights require additional safety steps. Follow our [guidelines](#) on how to safely handle broken fluorescent lights. As of January 1, 2024, fluorescent lights can no longer be sold in California.



USED MOTOR OIL AND FILTERS

One quart of motor oil can pollute up to 250,000 gallons of clean water. Used motor oil is a major source of oil contamination of waterways and can result in pollution of drinking water sources.



HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS

Household cleaners often contain ingredients that are toxic, corrosive or flammable.



PESTICIDES

Exposure to pesticides may cause a wide variety of both acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) health effects. Chronic exposure to some pesticides may increase the risk for certain types of conditions (including cancers and birth defects), cause damage to the immune system and to the genome, and affect development. Children may be especially vulnerable to pesticide exposure because they are still developing. Learn more about the dangers of pesticides at the [California Department of Public Health](#).



NON-EMPTY AEROSOLS

Non-empty aerosol cans that contain paints, pesticides, or cleaning products may contain hazardous chemicals and must be discarded safely. Most aerosol cans may be ignitable because they often contain propellants such as propane, butane, or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).



CAMPING FUEL

While single-use 1 lb. propane cylinders are convenient, they are often improperly disposed of and pose serious safety risks, environmental harm, and high monetary costs to the County and residents. "Empty", single-use cylinders often still contain a small amount of gas, posing a danger to sanitation workers due to the risk of explosions and resulting fires.

SAFELY DISPOSE OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

There are three FREE convenient options! Read carefully! Each disposal option accepts specific items.

1. Local drop-off at a collection center near you
2. Drop-off at an HHW event near you (appointment is required)
3. Curbside pick-up for batteries and other specific items. Contact your hauler for more information (only available in some cities)

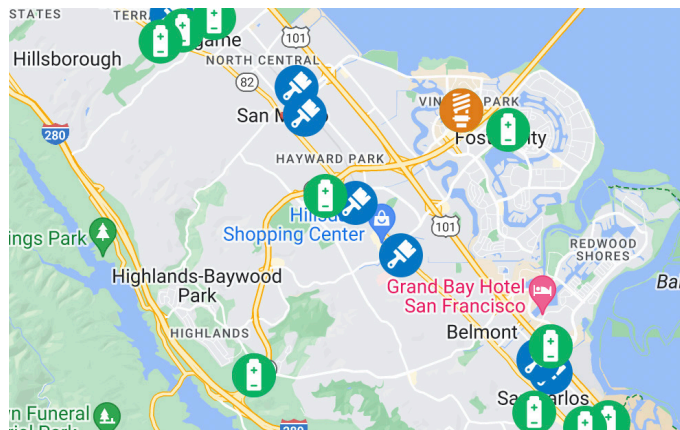
1. LOCAL DROP-OFF AT A COLLECTION CENTER NEAR YOU

BATTERIES, PAINT, FLUORESCENT LIGHTS

- There are over 50 free locations throughout San Mateo County to properly and safely dispose of these items. See the list and map of all locations [here](#).
- Visit paintcare.org for paint disposal options (primers, stains, varnish, shellac).

USED MOTOR OIL AND FILTERS

- There are over 50 used oil and filter collection centers in San Mateo County, such as auto parts retailers, auto repair shops, and more. See the list and map of all locations [here](#).
- Please be sure to call your desired location prior to dropping off to verify hours, limitations and requirements.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT SMCHealth.org/HHW-MOST-WANTED
OR CALL (650) 372-6200

2. DROP-OFF AT AN HHW EVENT NEAR YOU

San Mateo County provides free events in local Cities where anyone who lives in San Mateo County can drop off eligible HHW items. Most events occur on Saturdays - choose what is most convenient.

Check out the 2024 HHW drop-off event schedule below. To make an appointment and see current information, visit our [website](#) or call (650) 372-6200.

	SAN MATEO Every Friday, Saturday, Sunday	DALY CITY	MENLO PARK	PACIFICA	REDWOOD CITY	SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
JANUARY	except the 27 th	—	—	—	January 27 th	January 6 th
FEBRUARY	except the 17 th	—	—	—	—	—
MARCH	except the 9 th	March 9 th	—	March 16 th	—	—
APRIL	—	—	—	—	—	April 6 th
MAY	except the 11 th , 25 th	—	May 11 th	—	—	—
JUNE	—	—	—	June 15 th	—	—
JULY	except the 27 th	—	—	—	July 27 th	July 6 th
AUGUST	except the 31 st	—	—	—	—	—
SEPTEMBER	except the 14 th	September 14 th	—	September 21 st	—	—
OCTOBER	—	—	—	—	—	October 5 th
NOVEMBER	except the 9 th and 28 th -30 th	—	November 9 th	—	—	—
DECEMBER	closed the 25 th -28 th	—	—	December 21 st	—	—



Get notified via email about upcoming household hazardous waste drop-off events near you.

SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT
VISIT [SMCHEALTH.ORG/HHW-APPT](https://smchealth.org/HHW-APPT)
OR CALL (650) 372-6200

PREPARING FOR YOUR FREE DROP-OFF AT AN HHW EVENT:

- Review the [program rules](#) and requirements, and list of [items that are and are not accepted](#) through the program.
- Choose a day, time, and location that's convenient for you using our [online appointment system](#). You may also call (650) 372-6200 or email hhw@smcgov.org to make an appointment. Your name and address are used strictly to confirm you live in the County and are not shared with anyone or used for any other purpose.
- An appointment confirmation will be sent to you by text or email that includes driving directions to the drop-off location.
- [Prepare for your appointment](#) and arrive at the drop-off location at your confirmed day and time.
- There is a 10 gallon (or 50 pound) maximum per vehicle, per appointment, and the maximum container size is 5 gallons.
- At the drop-off location: stay inside your vehicle at all times. Our friendly professional staff will unload your vehicle while you wait.

3. CURBSIDE PICK-UP

Depending on your hauler, you may have different curbside options available to you. All haulers listed offer a household battery pickup program, and some provide additional services such as used motor oil and filters, used cooking oil, and compact fluorescent lights. Click on your hauler for more information. Note that there may be differences between single and multifamily dwelling curbside programs.

APARTMENT BATTERY RECYCLING

Select apartment complexes offer orange recycling battery buckets provided by waste haulers. Don't have one? Ask your property manager about getting one where you live.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT [SMCHEALTH.ORG/CURBSIDE](https://smchealth.org/curbside)
OR CALL (650) 372-6200

HAULERS

The haulers below accept the listed items for curbside pick-up. Please visit their website for more information.

REPUBLIC SERVICES OF DALY CITY

- Cooking oil recycling
- Used motor oil and oil filters
- Batteries and cell phones
- Compact fluorescent lamps - Must be placed in clear zip-type plastic bag

REPUBLIC SERVICES OF HALF MOON BAY

- Used motor oil and oil filters
- Batteries and cell phones

RECOLOGY SAN MATEO COUNTY

- Batteries and cell phones
- Apartment battery and cell phone collection bucket
- Used motor oil and oil filters

RECOLOGY OF THE COAST

- Batteries
- Apartment battery bucket collection

RECOLOGY SAN BRUNO

- Batteries
- Apartment battery collection

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO SCAVENGER

- Cell phones
- Computer monitors
- Electronic items
- Batteries
- Used motor oil and oil filters

GREENWASTE

- Used motor oil and oil filters
- Batteries
- Fluorescent lamps (CFL) - Must be placed in clear zip-type plastic bag

KUNZ VALLEY TRASH

- Used motor oil
- Video display devices
- Batteries



LESS IS MORE (HEALTHY)!

BUY FEWER PRODUCTS AND GET SOME FOR FREE!

Many of the items collected at the County's household hazardous waste collection events are still in good condition. Products include common household cleaners, auto supplies, fertilizers, wood preservatives, stains and latex paint. The [Product Give Away Program](#) redistributes these products for free.

LOOKING TO REDUCE HHW IN YOUR HOME?

Start with buying fewer cleaning products and choosing safer products!

- Visit [Safer Cleaning at Home](#) to explore how you can use simple ingredients like lemons, vinegar, and baking soda to safely clean almost anything in your home and protect your family from harsh chemicals.
- Get more ideas for making your home safer and healthier at our [A Healthy Home](#) and [Healthy Housing](#) web pages, [Safer Spring Cleaning Basics](#) and [Are You Ready for Spring Cleaning](#) videos.
- At the store? Shop safe by looking for the Environmental Protection Agency's [Safer Choice](#) label or use the [Clearya](#) app to scan products for alerts on toxic ingredients.
- [The Environmental Working Group](#) provides science-based guidance on reducing exposure to toxins and avoiding hazards contained in household products.
- [Women's Voices for the Earth](#) provides science-based information on cleaning product ingredients and user-friendly guides to support you in reducing chemical exposure.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Find out more about Household Hazardous Waste here: smchealth.org/hhw

Make an appointment here: smchealth.org/hhw-appt

¡En español! smchealth.org/hhw-appt-espanol

If you need more information, contact Environmental Health Services at:
(650) 372-6200 • hhw@smcgov.org



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