

Free household hazardous waste disposal

Q. I have a couple of unwanted insecticide containers with a little insecticide left in them. They are old and I'm not going to use them. They are just taking up space in my storage shed. Is there some place that I can take them to safely dispose of them?

A. This is an important question. We need to be responsible when disposing of pesticide containers, especially those with product still in the containers. Common pesticides used by homeowners include insecticides, fungicides and herbicides (weed killers). There are many other common household items that need to be disposed of properly such as pool chemicals, fluorescent lamps, paint, used oil, antifreeze, gasoline, batteries and computers. These items are hazardous or contain hazardous chemicals which can contaminate our water and environment when they are just placed in the trash to be hauled to a landfill. Florescent lights, for example, contain mercury. As a result, they must be disposed of properly and cannot be placed in the regular garbage. Batteries contain heavy metals such as mercury, lead, cadmium and nickel, which can contaminate the environment when disposed of improperly. Billions of batteries are purchased in the United States each year.

These kinds of items are often referred to as household hazardous waste. And we need to be responsible when it comes time to dispose of such items.

Okaloosa County will offer a free household hazardous waste drop-off on November 19 from 7 AM to 2 PM at its Household Hazardous Waste facility located at 80 Ready Avenue in Fort Walton Beach. Materials accepted include paint, pesticide, pool chemicals, used oil, gas and antifreeze, batteries, fluorescent lamps (including compact fluorescents), televisions, computers, etc. This drop-off event is intended for local residents only and is not intended for businesses. For more information on this event, call the Okaloosa County Public Works Department at 651-7394.

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