



Improving Farm and Home Waste Management

Keeping Idaho's Water Clean

Waste doesn't just go away; it enters the environment, with some wastes eventually entering ground water. Good management of the wastes around your farm and home can help protect the quality of your family's drinking water supply.

1. General philosophy for managing farm and home wastes

- **Buy with care.** Purchase only those items you need in amounts you can use, and use as few hazardous products as possible.
- **Try to use less hazardous products.** Contact the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Division of Environmental Quality (IDHW-DEQ) or local government for information suggesting product substitutes that are less harmful to both human health and the environment.
- **Try to use up products and use them safely.** This is the best way to minimize waste and protect your water supply.
- **Recycle or reuse.** Many of the items used around the farm and home can be recycled or reused by either yourself or someone you know. Take advantage of the recycling centers to which you have access and don't be afraid to give some products away. Items which may be waste to you might be useful to someone else. Instead of throwing away usable or repairable items, give them to a friend, organization, or business that can use them.
- **Know the sources of hazardous waste.** Know which products around your farm and home are potential contaminants of the environment and ground-water supplies so that you can manage their use and disposal. This will allow you to better protect your family's drinking water supply.
- **Follow safe disposal practices.** Following the recommendations for solid and hazardous waste disposal as described in these materials sets can help minimize the risk these wastes present to your family's drinking water supply.

2. Homestead waste

In rural locations, most wastes are disposed of on site. Common disposal methods include burning or simply piling or burying trash in a ditch on the "back 40." Waste disposed of in an open dump, or even underground, can take many years to degrade or breakdown. Hazardous wastes in a dump can move down through the soil and contaminate the ground water you drink, or can be washed into surface water bodies.

To minimize the pollution potential from farm, household, and shop wastes and activities, minimize the amount of wastes you produce, especially hazardous wastes. Examine your

activities that involve use of hazardous materials to make sure that you really need all the products you are using. Carefully consider how to use the products safely, recycle or reuse them when possible, and dispose of used or remaining products in a way that will not pose a risk to surface or ground water. A few simple management principles apply in every situation:

- Use hazardous products away from your well (at least 200 to 400 feet), even when all your spills and drips will be contained.
- Return excess product, spills, or drips to the original activity. For example, contain oil or grease drips and use for future lubrication needs, and apply pesticide container rinse water according to label directions for the pesticide.
- Contain any unusable wastes, spills, and drips for appropriate disposal.
- Take uncontaminated recyclables to a recycling facility if one is available.
- Never dispose of wastes in or around abandoned wells.

When solid waste generated on the homestead is disposed of in an approved manner, there is less likelihood of contaminating ground water. Pay attention to all state and local regulations when managing wastes on your site.

All household and some farm hazardous wastes are excluded from waste management regulations. However, you are not exempt from liability for damages arising from waste that is improperly disposed. Any farm operation that produces more than 220 lbs. of hazardous waste per month, or more than 2.2 lbs. of acutely hazardous waste, or accumulates (stores) more than 2,200 lbs. at any one time, is subject to state hazardous waste regulations.

Drain cleaner, oven cleaner, furniture polish, spot removers, and disinfectants are just a few household products which can contribute to hazardous waste. Disposal of hazardous cleaners and home maintenance products should be limited as much as possible. All household cleaners should be used per their instruction labels. Give excess, unwanted household chemicals to someone who can use them, or dispose of them at a household hazardous waste collection event. Do not dispose of hazardous cleaners "down the drain." It may interfere with proper functioning of septic tanks or sewer treatment and contaminate soil and/or ground water (drainfield).

Open burning of vegetative material is appropriate only where permitted by local ordinance. Minimize adverse health effects from smoke by burning outdoors in well-ventilated areas. **Materials or products containing toxic or harmful substances, including empty pesticide bags, must not be burned.** Contact your local fire district, Cooperative Extension System, Soil Conservation District, public health district, or Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for more information. Batteries, motor oil, grease, lubricants, antifreeze, gasoline, and petroleum products are included in this category of potential threats to ground water.

The design and location of the vehicle and equipment maintenance area is important. Even small drips and spills can add up to a problem for ground water. Try to avoid maintenance activities close to your well (within 200 to 400 feet) and use a location where spills and drips can be contained. A common practice is to soak up small drips and spills with kitty litter. It can then be disposed of in an approved landfill.

Empty containers from oil and other vehicle maintenance products should be recycled after the product is used, if possible. Take the container to a recycling center or reuse it for product storage. If the container cannot be recycled, dispose of it at a hazardous waste collection event/site or call your local landfill for instruction. Contact your county public works department, public health district, or DEQ regional office for further information.

Special management is needed for many of the hazardous wastes generated from your farm, household, and shop due to the potential threat to your drinking water supply. Most of these hazardous wastes can be broken down into three broad categories:

- Automotive and equipment maintenance products
- Building and wood maintenance products
- Farm and household pesticides

3. Automotive and equipment maintenance products

Vehicle batteries

Vehicle batteries contain lead and sulfuric acid. Lead can contaminate soil and water, and acid can burn skin. A battery contains approximately 18 pounds of toxic metals and a gallon of corrosive acids.

Disposal of old vehicle batteries on-property or in a landfill is not permitted in Idaho. The only recommended way to dispose of them is by recycling. The lead in the battery can be recycled for use in new batteries and other products. The plastic battery casing is also recyclable. Batteries should be stored in a safe, dry place out of direct sunlight, out of reach of children and pets, and away from your well.

Places that sell batteries are required to take back used batteries. Some service stations and scrap metal dealers will take used batteries as well. Many communities have recycling centers which handle old automotive batteries. Contact your county public works department, health district, or DEQ regional office for information on where to recycle batteries in your area.

Oil, grease, and lubricants

Disposing of used oil around your homestead, such as on driveways or around buildings and fences, can lead to contamination of your family's drinking water supply. Used motor oil contains organic chemicals and metals. A small amount of oil can contaminate large quantities of ground water.

Always store and work with oil, grease, and other lubricants away from your well. Use up grease and other lubricating products, or share them with someone who needs them. Store waste oil in closed, labeled containers (plastic milk jugs work well) until you can take the oil to be recycled. Service stations often accept limited amounts of used oil, or can inform you of places that do. Waste oil can also be burned in an onsite space heater designed for burning oil as a fuel. Oil must be uncontaminated to be burned or recycled. **Do not mix solvents or fuel with oil as it creates a more hazardous product, unsuitable to recycle or reuse.**

Antifreeze

Pouring antifreeze on the ground or into a ditch can lead to possible ingestion by pets, seepage into the water supply, or contamination of surface water sources. Store in a safe place, secured from children and pets. Antifreeze contains chemicals which are poisonous to animals and humans. Pets will lap up an antifreeze puddle because it tastes sweet. This is often fatal.

Waste antifreeze should be reused by adding it to another cooling system. Antifreeze should not be placed into an onsite septic system, because it may kill organisms the system depends on to break down wastes and can cause the system to fail. Spilled antifreeze should be cleaned up using an absorbent material such as kitty litter, and taken to a hazardous waste collection site or event, or an approved landfill.

Gasoline and other fuels

Petroleum products are among the most hazardous substances found around the farm and home. Store these products downslope and at least 400 feet from your well, if at all possible. Use up old fuels by diluting one part old fuel with five parts new fuel to protect your engine. If disposal of old fuel is necessary, it may be taken to a hazardous waste collection event. Contact your county public works department, local public health district, or DEQ regional office for the proper procedures involving large quantities of fuel.

For more detailed information about petroleum product storage and the risks it presents, see Fact/Worksheet 4, *Petroleum Product Storage*.

Solvents

Do not dispose of solvents on your property. Disposing of solvents by dumping them on the ground or in a septic system can allow the solvents to leach to the ground water that supplies your drinking water. Always use solvents away from your well and in a ventilated area. Store them in their original containers and out of the reach of children.

Some solvents, such as paint thinner, can be cleaned and reused. Clean dirty solvents by placing them in a closed transparent container and storing them until the paint or other material settles to the bottom. Pour the clean, reusable solvent off the top. Take the sludge to an approved hazardous waste collection event or site. Large quantities of solvents can be picked up by a solvent recycler. Contact the DEQ regional office nearest you for a list of recyclers in your area.

This category of potentially hazardous substances includes all types of pesticides and pesticide containers, including those used for indoor plants, home maintenance, and yard care. Handle all categories of pesticides as directed on the label to prevent health and environmental problems. Pay particular attention to pesticides classified as "restricted use."

Federal and State laws require pesticides be used according to the specific product label directions. If you can't use the pesticide, see if a neighbor or local business may have a need for it. In some instances, mini-bulk tanks and returnable containers allow the return of excess chemicals to the place of purchase.

For leftover pesticides that cannot be used or disposed of in any of these ways, store them safely until they can be taken to an approved community hazardous waste collection site or event. In Idaho, some household hazardous waste collection programs will not take business or farm quantities of pesticides (usually no more than a few quarts). Contact the Idaho Department of Agriculture (IDA) at (208) 334-3550 for assistance in this situation; the IDA has an active statewide pesticide waste disposal program. For information about local collection events, contact your local public health district or county Cooperative Extension System office.

Always be sure stored pesticides are in original containers, properly labeled, and in a locked cabinet or building out of the reach of children. To offer the greatest protection to your drinking water, store pesticides as far away as possible from your well or well lot. **Do not store pesticides in your pumphouse.**

Pesticides come in mini-bulk tanks, plastic containers, or paper containers. Mini-bulk tanks are returned to the place of purchase when application has been completed. Some plastic containers can be returned to the place of purchase for disposal. Paper containers should be bundled and taken to an approved landfill. **Do not burn or reuse old pesticide containers.** Check with your local dealer or IDA's Division of Agricultural Technology, (208) 334-3550, to learn what container disposal opportunities are available before purchasing the pesticide.

Always triple rinse containers, return the rinse water to the spray tank and apply following labeled instructions. If you cannot return plastic containers to the place of purchase, store the triple-rinsed containers in a dry, locked storage area until you can take them to a container recycling event or to an approved landfill. **Triple-rinsed pesticide containers may still contain enough pesticide residue that they should not be used for any other purpose.**

4. Farm and household pesticides

For more detailed information about the management and storage of pesticides on the farm, see Fact/Worksheet 2, *Pesticide Storage and Handling*. Further information on pesticide storage, handling, disposal, and safety can be obtained from the IDA's Division of Agricultural Technology, (208) 332-8500.

5. Building and wood maintenance products

The best method for managing paints, thinners, and cleaners is to buy only what you need, buy the least toxic product, and see that they are used up. Store them in well-ventilated areas out of reach of children and pets.

Paints and stains

Try to use up old paint in other painting projects, or give it to someone who can use it. Store paint in a dry place where it won't freeze. Paint usually remains usable if it mixes well when stirred and hasn't been frozen and thawed repeatedly. Paint that is no longer usable should be taken to a household hazardous waste collection event. Contact your local landfill or the DEQ regional office nearest you for more information.

Strippers, thinners, and cleaners

Do not dispose of these types of materials on your property. Some thinners and cleaners can be reused. Place them in a closed container and store until the paint or other material settles to the bottom. Pour the clean reusable solvent off the top. Take the sludge and any materials not reusable or recyclable to a hazardous waste collection site or event. Large quantities of thinners, strippers, and cleaners may be picked up by a solvent recycler. Contact the DEQ regional office nearest you for information on recyclers.

Unused products - caulks, glues, and adhesives

These products may contain hazardous materials and should be used with care and never disposed of on the property. Store products according to the label. If a product becomes unusable, it should be taken to a hazardous waste collection site or event.

Contacts and References

Who to call about...

Health concerns

- Your local public health district:

Boise:	(208) 375-5211	Caldwell:	(208) 455-5300
Coeur d'Alene	(208) 664-8736	Idaho Falls:	(208) 522-0310
Lewiston:	(208) 799-3100	Pocatello:	(208) 233-9080
Twin Falls:	(208) 734-5900	Black Foot:	(208) 785-2160
Gooding:	(208) 934-4477	Sandpoint:	(208) 263-5159

A specific product

- Contact the company that makes the product. The company's phone number is frequently on the label. Or, call the Chemical Referral Center, at (800) 262-8200. Sponsored by the Chemical Manufacturers' Association, this number will refer you to a product's manufacturer for answers about product questions.

Identification and disposal of hazardous wastes

- Contact the Idaho Division of Environmental Quality regional office for your area:

North (Coeur d'Alene):	(208) 769-1422
North Central (Lewiston):	(208) 799-4370
Southwest (Boise):	(208) 373-0550
South Central (Twin Falls):	(208) 736-2190
Southeast (Pocatello):	(208) 236-6160
Eastern (Idaho Falls):	(208) 528-2650

Waste reduction and recycling

Contact your local public health district, or DEQ central or local regional office.

Household hazardous waste collection events

- Contact your local public health district, public works department, DEQ regional office, or county Cooperative Extension System office about locations and dates of collection events in your area.

Pesticide waste disposal program collection events

- Contact the Idaho Department of Agriculture, Division of Agricultural Technology (208) 332-8500 for information on collection dates, locations, and sign-up requirements for your area.

Pesticides and other agricultural chemicals

- Contact the Idaho Department of Agriculture Pesticide Management Division, (208) 332-8500 for general information on pesticides.