

Household Hazardous Waste

Submitted by Alexis Baker, Environmental Programs Coordinator

Reduce, reuse, and recycle is not a new catch phrase to many people. When dealing with household hazardous waste, however, the most important thing you can do is to reduce the amount you buy and create. First decide if there is a reasonable non-toxic alternative. For example, use compost instead of fertilizers. Baking soda may be the wonder cleaner. It can be mixed with vinegar to unclog drains, and clean tiles, tubs, and can soften fabrics. Baking soda by itself makes a great abrasive to clean and whiten porcelain toilets. Vinegar can clean windows and floors. Lemon juice and salt can remove rust and tarnish. Instead of pesticides, spray plants with water and dish soap. For further information on alternative non-toxic cleaners, visit the Henderson County Solid Waste website at <http://www.hendersoncountync.org/solidwaste> under the HHW/electronics tab. Second, if no other alternatives can reasonably accomplish the necessary task, only buy what you need. Sometimes, it is difficult to resist a good sale on herbicides and pesticides. However, many chemicals have expiration dates, and buying large amounts may be a waste of money, and proper disposal can become a concern. Buy only enough to finish the job or that you can reasonably use long before the expiration date. Finish using the products before purchasing new products.

After trying to reduce and reuse, then there are options to recycle household hazardous waste. Last year, Henderson County applied for a grant from the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance. The \$20,000 grant helped to buy a hazardous household waste facility. A small event was held on May 21st from 9am-12pm as part of a staff training event. Staff was able to collect several cans of paint, household cleaners, and pesticides. Solid Waste Staff anticipates holding another household hazardous waste event in August. This date will be posted to the solid waste website and press releases can be read in the Hendersonville Times-News.

During these events, residents of Henderson County may bring paints for a fee of \$5 per gallon. Other chemicals such as household cleaners, pesticides, herbicides, and home thermostats may be brought free of charge. In the meantime, this month, the Henderson County Cooperative Extension will hold an event at Jackson Park from 10am-2pm on July 20th to collect pesticides and herbicides. For information on this event, contact Ivy Olson or Marvin Owings at 828-697-4891 at the Cooperative Extension.

Other potentially household hazardous wastes are contained in the office equipment you may use every day. Electronics often contain heavy metals. Televisions and computer monitors contain lead. Circuit boards contain lead, chromium, cadmium and mercury, with significant variation depending on the board. Mercury switches and relays are contained in electronic equipment such as flat screen televisions. PCBs, a chemical responsible for rashes, liver failure, and believed to cause cancer, may be found in electronics predating the 1980s. Rechargeable batteries can contain such metals as cadmium and lithium. While, electronics likely pose little threat in a house or office, it is best to keep these items out of the landfill where these metals and compounds may find their way into water or soil. Every Wednesday from 9am-12pm and by appointment,

electronics are collected at the Henderson County Transfer Station located on Stoney Mountain Road in Hendersonville. Small televisions are collected for \$5 and flatscreens and consoles for \$15. All other electronics are collected free of charge. For more information on acceptable items into the electronics or hazardous household waste collection, please contact the Solid Waste Division at 697-4505 or for recycling information call 694-6524.

Alexis can be contacted at 694-6524 or by email at alexisbaker@hendersoncountync.org