

Teaching Resources

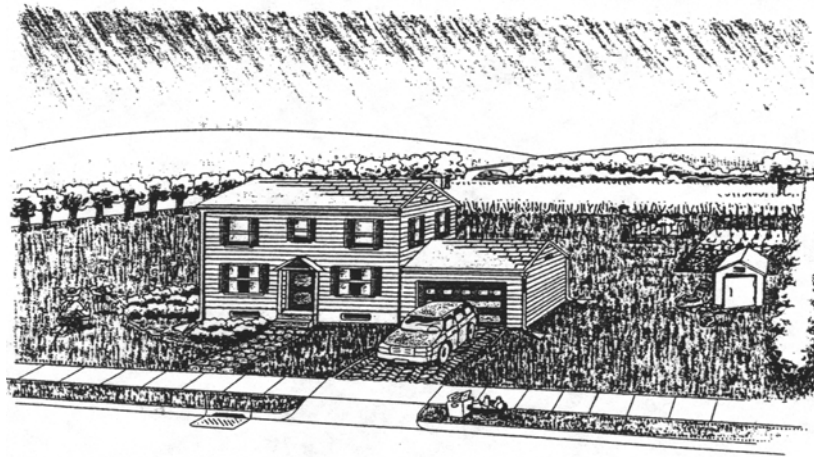
Managing Hazardous Household Products

by Elaine Andrews

Of

Home*A*Syst

An Environmental Risk-Assessment Guide for the Home



Home*A*Syst is a publication developed by the National Farm*A*Syst/Home*A*Syst Program in Cooperation with the Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service (NRAES), 1998.

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Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 1—Product Selection, Purchase, and Use

	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Product Selection	I always read labels; understand signal words; and respect the health or environmental hazards labels describe. I choose the least hazardous product needed for the job.	I don't read labels or don't understand what they mean, but I use a "common sense" approach to safety.	I never read labels. I purchase products without considering what the product is made of or how it will be used.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Quantities purchased	I buy only what is needed for a specific job. I use up most of the product within a few months after purchase or give excess away to someone else.	I buy excess product, but provide safe and accessible storage	I buy more than is needed, then purchase additional product without checking on current supplies.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Safety precautions	I follow label instructions and take recommended precautions against exposure (such as providing good ventilation and wearing safety goggles and gloves). I never mix products.	I occasionally read label instructions. I take some precautions. I occasionally mix products for specific cleaning tasks, but I always check safety precautions first.	I never follow label instructions and take no precautions—even when recommended. If one product doesn't work, I add in another without checking safety precautions.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High

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*HASass1

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 1

Product Selection

LOW RISK

- I always read labels.
- I understand signal words.
- I respect the health or environmental hazards labels describe.
- I choose the least hazardous product needed for the job.

MEDIUM RISK

- I don't read labels or don't understand what they mean.
- I use a "common sense" approach to safety.

HIGH RISK

- I never read labels.
- I purchase products without considering what the product is made of or how it will be used.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 1 **Quantities Purchased**

LOW RISK

- I buy only what is needed for a specific job.
- I use up most of the product within a few months after purchase
- I give excess away to someone else.

MEDIUM RISK

- I buy excess product;
- But, I provide safe and accessible storage

HIGH RISK

- I buy more than is needed.
- Then, I purchase additional product without checking on current supplies.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 1

Safety Precautions

LOW RISK

- I follow label instructions and take recommended precautions against exposure (such as providing good ventilation and wearing safety goggles and gloves).
- I never mix products.

MEDIUM RISK

- I occasionally read label instructions.
- I take some precautions.
- I occasionally mix products for specific cleaning tasks; but I always check safety precautions first.

HIGH RISK

- I never follow label instructions.
- I take no precautions—even when recommended.
- If one product doesn't work, I add in another without checking safety precautions.
- Then, I purchase additional product without checking on current supplies.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 2—Safe Storage

	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Child safety	I store hazardous products in a locked cabinet or other location inaccessible to children.	I keep products out of the direct reach of children (on a high to shelf, for example) but still accessible.	My products are easily accessible to children (for example, in an unlocked cabinet on the lower shelf).	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Containers, storage location, and spill protection	I store leftovers in their original containers, properly sealed. Products are stored by type. My home environment is protected against leaks or spills.	I store original containers in a disorganized way. I don't provide protection against leaks or spills.	I transfer leftovers to other containers such as used milk jugs or glass jars. I store leftovers without caps or lids. I don't provide protection against leaks or spills.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Ventilation	I store volatile products (like solvents and petroleum-based fluids) in places with good ventilation.	I don't pay attention to storage location, but each container is in good shape and tightly sealed.	I store products in areas with poor ventilation such as basements, closets, or crawl spaces. Containers are damaged or left open.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High

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*HASass2

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 2 **Safe Storage-Child Safety**

LOW RISK

I store hazardous products in a locked cabinet or other location inaccessible to children.

MEDIUM RISK

I keep products out of the direct reach of children (e.g. on a high to shelf) but still accessible.

HIGH RISK

My products are easily accessible to children (e.g. in an unlocked cabinet on the lower shelf).

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 2

Safe Storage-Containers, storage location, and spill protection

LOW RISK

- I store leftovers in their original containers, properly sealed.
- Products are stored by type.
- My home environment is protected against leaks or spills.

MEDIUM RISK

- I store original containers in a disorganized way.
- I don't provide protection against leaks or spills.

HIGH RISK

- I transfer leftovers to other containers such as used milk jugs or glass jars.
- I store leftovers without caps or lids.
- I don't provide protection against leaks or spills.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 2 **Safe Storage-Ventilation**

LOW RISK

I store volatile products (like solvents and petroleum-based fluids) in places with good ventilation.

MEDIUM RISK

I don't pay attention to storage location, but each container is in good shape and tightly sealed.

HIGH RISK

I store products in areas with poor ventilation such as basements, closets, or crawl spaces. Containers are damaged or left open.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3—Product Disposal

	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Household Trash Trash containing plastics or empty containers of hazardous ingredients	I rinse empty yard and garden pesticide container and include the rinse water in yard and garden management. I dispose of ash, mixed trash, and empty product containers at the community landfill. I do not burn trash.	I dispose of ash from mixed trash, leftover pesticides and solvents on my property, but away from my well or waterway. I burn hazardous containers.	I always dispose of ash from mixed trash, leftover pesticides and solvents near a well or waterway. I burn hazardous containers near people or animals.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Strong acids and bases Found in hobby and recreation products, concentrated building cleaners, and repair products	I share any leftover products. I dilute strong acids and bases and pour them down a drain that connects to a sewage treatment facility.	I pour strong acids and cleaners down the drain without first diluting them with water. I send leftovers to a landfill (with proper protection for garbage haulers and employees).	I dump strong acids and cleaners directly into a storm sewer or waterway or on a paved slope leading to a waterway.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Antifreeze, waste motor oil	I recycle antifreeze and waste oil by taking them to properly qualified dumping stations	I pour my used antifreeze into a septic system or municipal treatment system.	I dump my used antifreeze and waste oil always in the same place, near a well or waterway. I dump these materials directly into a waterway.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Batteries May contain mercury, cadmium, or lead	I recycle batteries or take them to a hazardous waste disposal program.	I dispose of batteries in a community landfill.	I always dump batteries near a well or waterway.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High

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*HASass3A

ASSESSMENT 3—Product Disposal (continued)

	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Bottled gas	I recycle bottled gas containers.	I store containers that may still contain some gas.	I put containers in my trash or leave them lying around.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Cleaning and repair products containing hazardous solvents (non-water-soluble) and paint	I share leftovers when possible. I take leftover products containing mercury, pesticides, or hazardous solvents to a hazardous waste disposal program.	I dispose of leftover products in a community landfill.	I always dump leftover products. I dump leftovers near a well or waterway. I dump all my leftovers directly into a waterway. <i>(NOTE: This is illegal!)</i>	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Fluorescent bulbs Contain mercury.	I recycle burned-out fluorescent bulbs or lamps.	I put my burned-out bulbs in the trash.	I leave my burned-out bulbs at a dump.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High
Pesticides See chapter 7, "Yard and Garden Care" (page 69), information.	I use preventive actions to control pests, indoors and outdoors. I explore options for nonchemical pest controls. I properly choose, store, handle, apply, and dispose of chemical pest controls.	When solving pest problems, I do not practice much prevention or explore nonchemical options.	I DO NOT handle pesticides as directed on the label.	<input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> High

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*HASass3B

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal

Household Trash / Trash containing plastics or empty containers of hazardous ingredients

LOW RISK

- I rinse empty yard and garden pesticide container and include the rinse water in yard and garden management.
- I dispose of ash, mixed trash, and empty product containers at the community landfill.
- I do not burn trash.

MEDIUM RISK

- I dispose of ash from mixed trash, leftover pesticides and solvents on my property, but away from my well or waterway.
- I burn hazardous containers.

HIGH RISK

- I always dispose of ash from mixed trash, leftover pesticides and solvents near a well or waterway.
- I burn hazardous containers near people or animals.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal

Strong acids and bases found in hobby and recreation products, concentrated building cleaners, & repair products

LOW RISK

- I share any leftover products.
- I dilute strong acids and bases and pour them down a drain that connects to a sewage treatment facility.

MEDIUM RISK

- I pour strong acids and cleaners down the drain without first diluting them with water.
- I send leftovers to a landfill (with proper protection for garbage haulers and employees).

HIGH RISK

I dump strong acids and cleaners directly into a storm sewer or waterway or on a paved slope leading to a waterway.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal

Antifreeze, waste motor oil

LOW RISK

I recycle antifreeze and waste oil by taking them to properly qualified dumping stations

MEDIUM RISK

I pour my used antifreeze into a septic system or municipal treatment system.

HIGH RISK

- I dump my used antifreeze and waste oil always in the same place, near a well or waterway.
- I dump these materials directly into a waterway.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal

Batteries may contain mercury, cadmium, or lead

LOW RISK

I recycle batteries or take them to a hazardous waste disposal program.

MEDIUM RISK

I dispose of batteries in a community landfill.

HIGH RISK

I always dump batteries near a well or waterway.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal - Bottled gas

LOW RISK

I recycle bottled gas containers.

MEDIUM RISK

I store containers that may still contain some gas.

HIGH RISK

I put containers in my trash or leave them lying around.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal

Cleaning and repair products containing Hazardous solvents (non-water-soluble) and paint

LOW RISK

- I share leftovers when possible.
- I take leftover products containing mercury, pesticides, or hazardous solvents to a hazardous waste disposal program.

MEDIUM RISK

I dispose of leftover products in a community landfill.

HIGH RISK

- I always dump leftover products.
- I dump leftovers near a well or waterway.
- I dump all my leftovers directly into a waterway.
(NOTE: *This is illegal!*)

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal

Fluorescent bulbs (contain mercury)

LOW RISK

I recycle burned-out fluorescent bulbs or lamps.

MEDIUM RISK

I put my burned-out bulbs in the trash.

HIGH RISK

I leave my burned-out bulbs at a dump.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

ASSESSMENT 3

Product Disposal - Pesticides

LOW RISK

- I use preventive actions to control pests, indoors and outdoors.
- I explore options for non-chemical pest controls.
- I properly choose, store, handle, apply, and dispose of chemical pest controls.

MEDIUM RISK

When solving pest problems, I do not practice much prevention or explore non-chemical options.

HIGH RISK

I DO NOT handle pesticides as directed on the label.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

Hazardous Product Examples and Inventory

Check for hazardous products stored in your home. Use the list below to plan ways to improve your use, storage, and/or disposal of these products. If you are unsure about disposal, contact your local Cooperative Extension office or state environmental protection agency.

Category/product	Is it properly stored?	Is information about proper disposal needed?	Are there special precautions to keep in mind?
HOUSEHOLD TRASH			
Ash/sludge from burned home or garage trash (<i>Note: Burning trash is illegal in many states!</i>)			
Fluorescent bulbs/lamps (contain mercury)			
Waste motor oil			
Plastic wraps and containers (only hazardous when burned)			
Pesticide or solvent containers			
Empty containers from other product categories listed below			
CLOTHING AND FABRIC CARE PRODUCTS			
Mothballs			
Dry-cleaning fluids			
Spot removers (solvent-based)			
Shoe/leather polishes			
HOBBY AND RECREATION PRODUCTS			
Artist paints and solvents			
Charcoal lighter fluid			
Strong acids/bases*			

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*HASexamA

Category/product	Is it properly stored?	Is information about proper disposal needed?	Are there special precautions to keep in mind?
HOBBY AND RECREATION PRODUCTS (continued)			
Bottled gas			
Household batteries (may contain mercury or cadmium)			
BUILDING/WOOD CLEANERS AND REPAIR PRODUCTS			
Building and wood cleaners with organic solvent ingredients:			
• Wood polishes			
• Products for wood floor and panel cleaning			
Building and equipment maintenance products:			
• Strong acids, bases*			
• Lead-based paint			
• Oil/alkyd paints and primers			
• Marine and exterior paints containing mercury and/or pesticides			
• Aerosol paint products			
• Stains and finishes			
• Roof coatings and sealants			
• Rust removers			
• Silicon lubricants			
• Other lubricants			
• Adhesive removers			
• Paint and finish preparation products			

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*HASexamB

Category/product	Is it properly stored?	Is information about proper disposal needed?	Are there special precautions to keep in mind?
<i>BUILDING/WOOD CLEANERS AND REPAIR PRODUCTS (continued)</i>			
• Adhesives such as glues and caulk			
• Wood-preserving products			
• Products for brush or spray gun cleaning			
• Water repellents for wood and cement			
• Solvents, as those used in degreasers and paint thinners, stains, and varnishes			
<i>PESTICIDES</i>			
Pesticides labeled “restrictive use”			
General-use pesticides			
Old pesticides			
Unwanted pesticides			
<i>VEHICLE MAINTENANCE CHEMICALS</i>			
Vehicle maintenance products such as antifreeze, oil and grease, and transmission fluid			
Solvents for oil and grease removal and disposal			
Engine and parts cleaners such as carburetor and brake cleaner			
Paints and paint preparation products			
Lead acid batteries			
Battery terminal protector			
Tire cleaners			

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Category/product	Is it properly stored?	Is information about proper disposal needed?	Are there special precautions to keep in mind?
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE CHEMICALS (continued)			
Rust removers			
Ignition wire dryer			
Gasket removers			
Aerosol paint and primer products			
Brake quieter			
Brush and spray gun cleaners			

***NOTE:** You can identify strong acids or bases in the product you are using by noting:

- If the hazard warning label recommends that the user wear skin protection or avoid breathing the vapors or aerosol mists
- If the product was intended for commercial use (industrial-strength cleaner, for example)
- If the product was intended to manage difficult stains or dirt on hard surfaces (for example, rust or lime remover)

Now that you have completed this inventory, you are more familiar with hazardous products found in your home. Review the inventory once again and consider the following:

- Do I need all of these products in my home?
- Are there less hazardous alternatives I can use?
- Do I have as much information as I need to make good use, storage, and disposal decisions?

Managing Hazardous Household Products

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS THAT COULD BE HAZARDOUS IF IMPROPERLY MANAGED

Building supplies—sealants, some adhesives, wood preservatives

Vehicle-related products—antifreeze, oil, cleaning solvents, lead-acid batteries, gasoline

Home maintenance products—oil-based paints, mineral spirits, products that can remove difficult greases or adhesives, paint stripper

Hobby and recreational supplies—photo developer chemicals, marine paints, electronic equipment cleaners, swimming pool chemicals

Pesticides—herbicides, insecticides, rodent poison, yard insect foggers, chemical strips, fungicides, aquacides

Managing Hazardous Household Products

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Whether you are using a cleaning product or a pesticide, don't rely only on the label for information on health emergencies or environmental dangers. The information may be incomplete or incorrect. **Poison Control Centers** - whose resources feature a national computer data network - can provide emergency health information about a product. Look up your local or state number, write it here:

and keep the number close to your phone. For information about spills of hazardous products, contact your state natural resources or agriculture agency, or the National Response Center at **(800) 424-8802**.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

LOOKING FOR AN ALTERNATIVE?

Adhesives—Use a water-based or latex adhesive.

Batteries—Choose rechargeable batteries (removable, so they can be recycled) and mercury-free batteries when possible.

Cleaners—Choose soap- or detergent-based cleaners when possible. Avoid non-water-soluble and corrosive cleaners when others offer an effective substitute.

Household pesticides—Look for ways to reduce your need for these products through appropriate cleaning and maintenance habits.

Floor and wood-finish strippers—Use a detergent or water-based stripper.

Paint stripper—Use sandpaper, a scraper, or heat gun for small jobs.

Wood preservative— Use a water-sealing coating.

Several of the above suggestions were provided by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Managing Hazardous Household Products

WHEN YOU STORE HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS, DO YOU:

- Keep them out of the reach of children and pets, preferably in a locked, secure area?
- Store them in their original containers?
- Clearly label and date any alternative containers?
- Keep containers tightly sealed and dry?
- Store products at least 150 feet from a well or waterway?
- Keep products in a well-ventilated area and away from sources of ignition?
- Store batteries and flammable chemicals in an area shaded from direct sunlight?

Managing Hazardous Household Products

REDUCE YOUR NEED FOR PESTICIDES IN THE HOME

- Maintain regular cleaning habits, especially in the kitchen area.
- Caulk cracks and other openings to the outside.
- Keep screens repaired.
- Keep houseplants healthy by providing appropriate care.

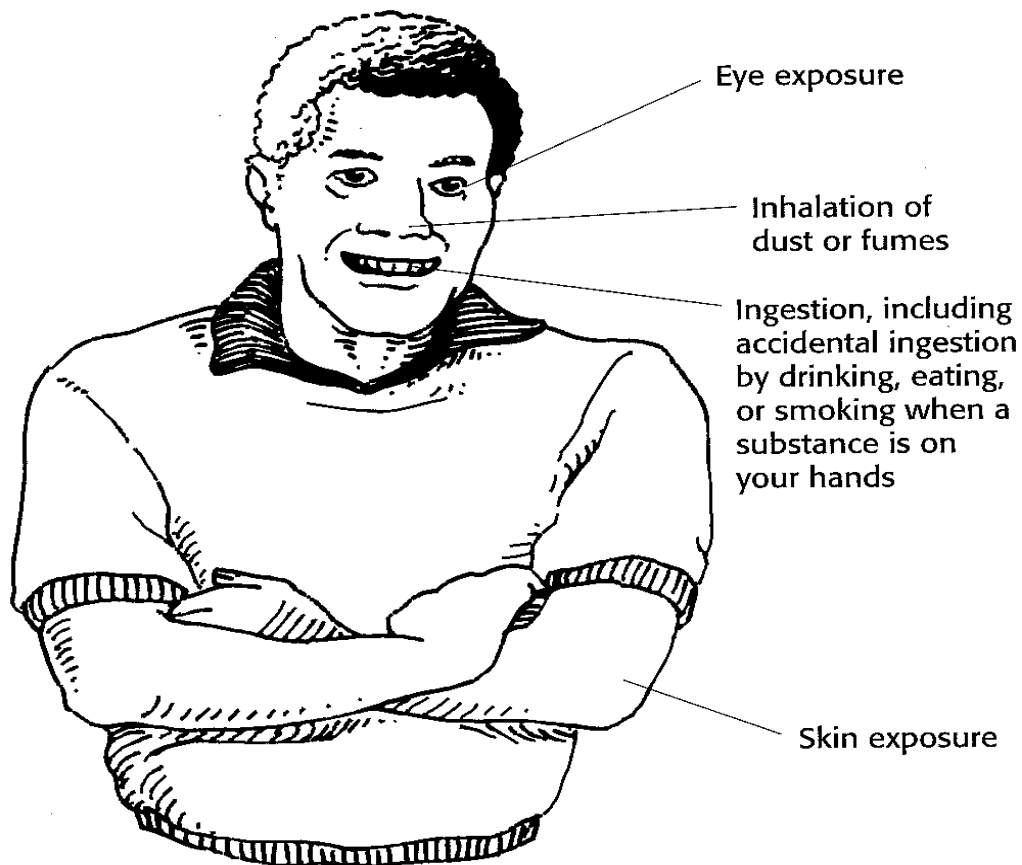
Managing Hazardous Household Products



Product labels provide details about how to safely use, store, and dispose of a product

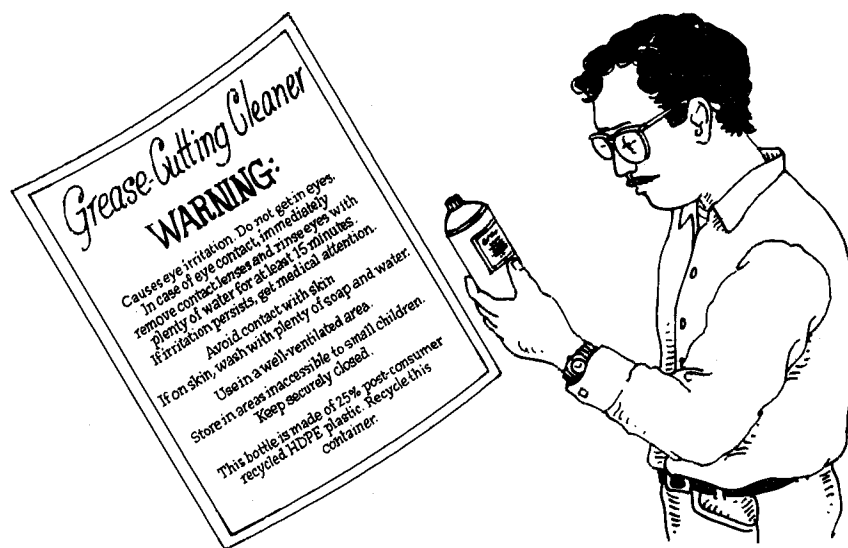
*HASfig1

Managing Hazardous Household Products



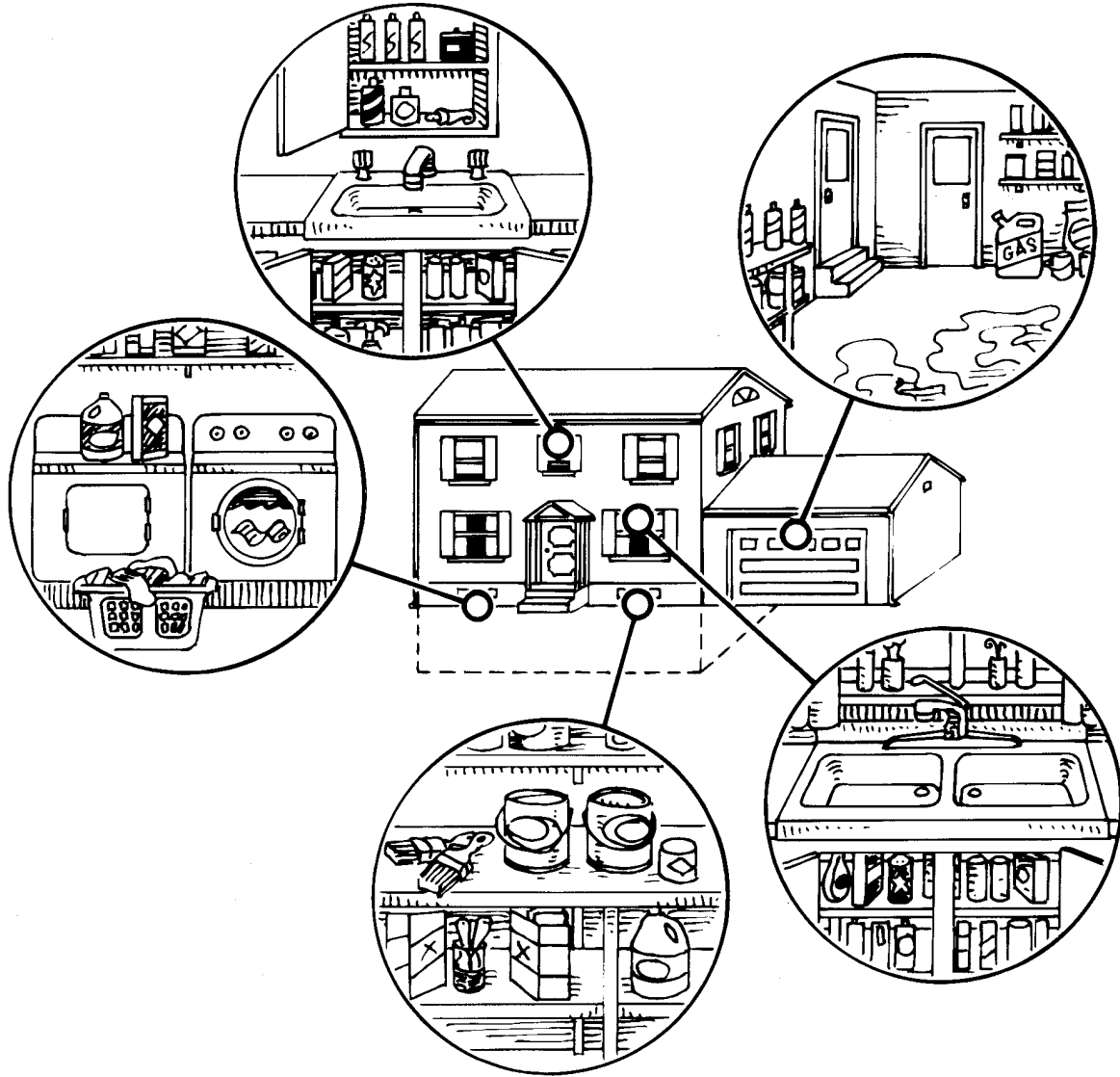
You can be exposed to a product ingredient by ingestion, inhalation, and contact with skin or eyes

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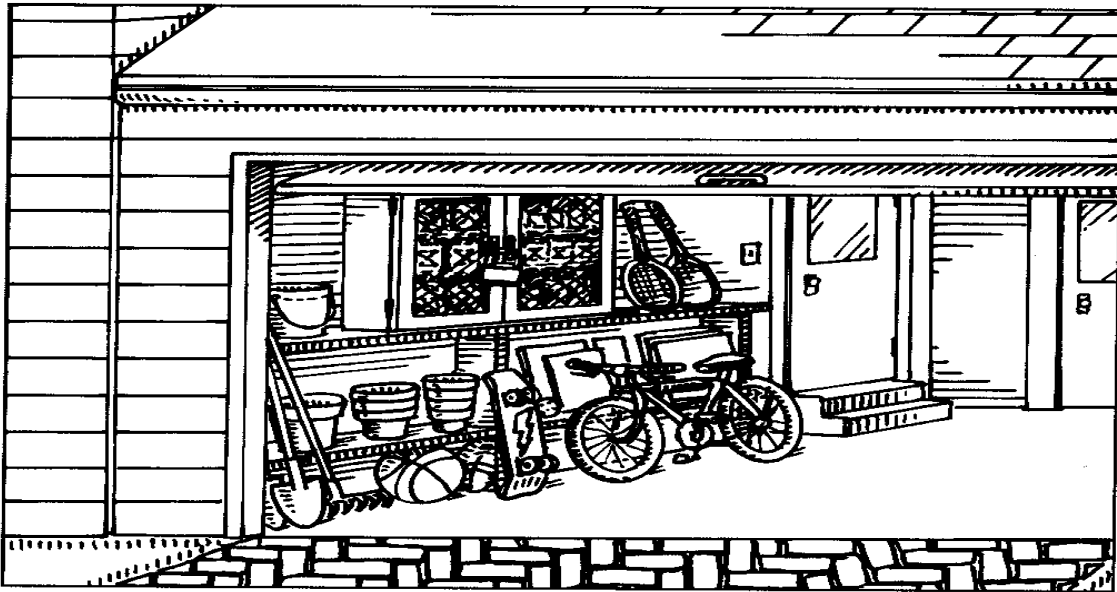
Product labels provide details about how to safely use, store, and dispose of a product

Managing Hazardous Household Products



Hazardous products may be stored throughout the house

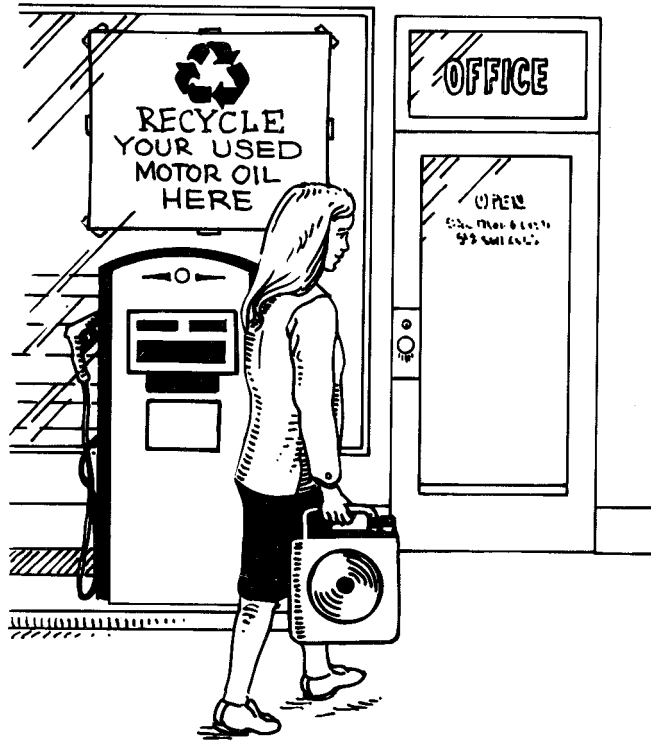
Managing Hazardous Household Products



Hazardous products should be stored in a
locked cabinet or other location
inaccessible to children

*HASfig5

Managing Hazardous Household Products



Used motor oil and antifreeze are accepted in many communities for recycling