

# BEST PRACTICES



## Spring Cleaning the “Green” Way

Are you thinking about cleaning out your house or garage this spring? If so, you may have “hazardous” household products that should NEVER be put in the garbage. The average American household has dozens of hazardous products, including oil paints and thinners, solvents, used motor oil and some cleaning supplies.

How do you know if a product is hazardous? Look for the key words POISON, DANGER, WARNING or CAUTION on the label. In addition to being harmful to pets and family members, hazardous products can harm the environment if they are not properly stored and disposed of.

### Follow these steps to keep your family, pets and local waterways safe:

- Store in original container, and do not remove label
- Store hazardous products in a large plastic tote to prevent/contain spills and leaks both at home and in the car
- Follow the label instructions carefully when cleaning up spills
- Never combine different products together. A combination of products could create hazardous fumes, ignite or explode
- Take all unused hazardous products and any materials used to clean up spills to Thurston County’s HazoHouse for proper disposal

To make your home greener this spring, replace hazardous products with products that are safer for your family and the environment. For a guide to safer household products, go to <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhm/saferproducts.html>

### If you plan to clean your carpets or do pressure washing (or plan to hire a contractor to do so), ensure these guidelines are followed to prevent illicit discharges:

#### Pressure washing:

- Use the lowest setting and direct the wash water to a landscaped area.
- Avoid using toxic cleaning products.
- Cover the ground with tarps, and sweep, vacuum, or rake up paint chips to keep them from entering catch basins. If you have an older home, have chips tested to find out if they contain heavy metals that require them to be disposed of as hazardous waste.

#### Carpet cleaning:

- If on a sewer system, filter out debris and flush dirty wash water.
- If on a septic, filter and spread dirty water over a landscaped area. The cleaning agents can harm your septic system.
- Throw filtered debris into the trash.
- If contracting a service, ask the company about their wash water disposal policy.



*Hazardous household products can be safely disposed at HazoHouse, which is located at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center, 2418 Hogum Bay Road NE in Lacey. HazoHouse is open Friday through Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The service is free for residential residents; there is a small charge for businesses. For more information about what materials are accepted at HazoHouse, how to properly pack and transport such items, or for directions, contact Thurston County Public Works at 360-786-5494 or go to: [www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/hazardous/haz-hazohouse.htm](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/hazardous/haz-hazohouse.htm)*

### Reporting Spills

An illicit discharge is defined as anything other than stormwater going into the stormwater system. Examples are carpet cleaning waste water, paint, oil, pet waste, sewage, foam, grease and garbage. To report a small-scale spill or illicit discharge, call your jurisdiction’s 24-hour hotline. You can do so anonymously.

**Olympia: 360-753-8333**

**Lacey: 360-491-5644**

**Tumwater: 360-754-4150**

**Thurston County: 360-867-2099**

To report a large-scale spill or illicit discharge, call the **WA Dept. of Ecology Spill Hotline: 360-407-6300.**

**Call 911 if there is an immediate threat to life.**

*Source: Stream Team News, Spring 2015*