

HAZARDOUS WASTE INFORMATION



The average Canadian household produces 35 litres of hazardous waste each year. Based on this, the 63,000 homes serviced by the Bluewater Recycling Association would produce 2.2 million litres of hazardous waste annually. This is enough to fill five Olympic-sized swimming pools. It would take 166 trucks, totaling one kilometre in length, to hold all this waste. Not including industrial or agricultural hazardous waste, Ontario homes produce a total of 140 million litres per year. This would require over 10,500 fuel trucks stretching from the City of London to Grand Bend to carry this quantity of material.

Hazardous waste is the most dangerous of all wastes. It can immediately affect man and the environment or its full effects may take years to appear. The Ministry of Environment and Energy uses the following definition: **Hazardous Waste is dangerous to human health and the environment. It includes toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive and radioactive waste from homes, industry and agriculture.**

Agriculture and industry may produce the most hazardous waste by volume and mass, but the biggest threat to the majority of Canadians is our homes. Our closets, cupboards, basements and garages are full of hazardous products, also known as **household hazardous waste**.

Products are considered hazardous when they are corrosive, reactive, flammable, toxic and/or radioactive. These hazards are usually identified by the use of graphic symbols; these symbols are explained in the table.

A product may pose several hazards in which case its container/packaging will have several symbols. A written explanation may accompany or replace the symbols.

Dangers associated with a product can be reduced through careful shopping. Most aerosol cans are explosive; if a product can be purchased in a 'pump', do so. Not only will you reduce the danger of an explosion, you will replace flammable and atmospherically harmful propellants.



CORROSIVE
Substances that eat and wear away at many materials.
ex. battery acid, drain cleaner



FLAMMABLE
Liquids that can ignite under any circumstance.
ex. lighter fluid, turpentine



TOXIC
Materials that, even in small quantities are poisonous.
ex. rat poison, chlorine bleach



REACTIVE
Materials that can create an explosion or deadly vapours.
ex. ammonia, chlorine bleach



RADIOACTIVE
Materials that give off small doses of radiation.
ex. ionizing smoke detectors