

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

Household toxics--such as common household cleaners, paint products and motor oil--can pollute our local rivers and streams, as well as groundwater, if not disposed of as hazardous waste.

Minimize your use of hazardous chemicals by using safe and effective non-toxic substitutes. Buy the least toxic products available such as those labeled "non-toxic", "non-petroleum based" and "free of ammonia, phosphates, dye or perfume."

Store your unused household chemicals securely and dispose at periodically announced Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events. Contact the Kent County Resource Recovery program at 616-336-2501 for drop off locations nears you.

1. Concrete and Masonry

- Fresh concrete and mortar application materials can wash down or blow into the street, gutter, or storm drains posing a hazard to aquatic life. Also, these materials could clog the storm drain system causing flooding to your and your neighbors.
- Do not mix up more fresh concrete or cement than you will use.
- Store bags of cement and plaster under cover, protected from rainfall, runoff, and wind, and away from gutters and storm drains.
- NEVER dispose of cement washout or concrete dust onto driveways, streets, gutters or storm drains.

2. Painting

All paints and solvents contain chemicals that are harmful to aquatic life. Toxic chemicals can come from liquid or solid products or from cleaning residues on rags. It is especially important to prevent these chemicals from entering storm drains.

Paint Cleanup

- NEVER clean brushes or rinse paint containers into a street, gutter or storm drain.
- For oil-based paints, paint out brushes to the extent possible. Clean with thinner and then filter and reuse thinner.
- For water-based paints, paint out brushes to the extent possible, then rinse in the sink.
- When thoroughly dry, used brushes, empty cans (lids off), rags and drop clothes may be disposed of as trash.

Paint Removal

- Chemical paint stripping residue is a hazardous waste and should be taken to the next Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event.
- Sweep paint chips and dust and dispose as trash.

Paint Recycling

- Use leftover paint for touch-ups or recycle it at a Household Hazardous Waste Recycling Event. Donate lead-free paint to a local church, school, or other local community organization.

3. Landscaping & Gardening

- Intensive gardening and landscaping increase the likelihood that garden chemicals and soil will wash into storm drains. Pesticides and herbicides not only kill garden invaders, they also harm beneficial insects, poison fish and contaminate ground and surface water.
- Use organic or non-toxic fertilizers and pesticides. Do not fertilize or use pesticides near ditches, gutters or storm drains.
- Store pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals in a covered area to prevent runoff.
- Do not blow, sweep or rake leaves or grass clippings into gutters or storm drains. In addition to polluting our water, they could plug the drainage ditches and cause flooding for you and your neighbors.
- The City of Walker has an annual leaf pick-up program. Contact the Public Works Department at (616)791-6854 for dates and times.
- Conserve water by using drip irrigation, soaker hoses, or micro-spray systems.

4. Construction

- Sediment, from excavation and other construction projects is the most common pollutant washed from work sites. Sediment entering the river through storm drains harms aquatic life and disrupts the food chain upon which both fish and people depend.

5. General Practices

- Keep all construction debris away from the street, gutter, and storm drain. Look for and clean up material that may have traveled away from your property.
- Keep materials out of the rain by storing them indoors or outdoors with a secure roof or plastic sheeting.

6. Erosion Control

- Schedule grading and excavation projects for dry weather.
- Cover excavated material and stockpiles of asphalt, sand, etc. with plastic tarps.
- Prevent erosion by planting fast-growing annual and perennial grasses. These will shield and bind the soil.
- The City of Walker requires that a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit be obtained for any earth disturbing activity that is greater than 1 Acre or is within 500' of a lake or stream. For more information please contact the City of Walker Engineering Department at (616)791-6327.