

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

BASIC HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INFORMATION

A hazardous material is defined as any solid, liquid or gas when released in an uncontrolled state may be harmful to humans, animals, crops and the environment. Hazardous materials include: explosives, gases, oxidizers, poisons, radiological material, corrosives, flammable liquids and flammable solids.

Hazardous materials are frequently used in business and industry. They are transported daily on highways and rail lines. It is likely every home contains materials that could be dangerous under certain circumstances such as pesticides, fertilizers, cleaning agents, pool chemicals, gasoline, fuel oil, propane and natural gas to name a few.

Be advised mixing commonly used cleaning products could produce deadly vapors, so always read labels carefully. Keep hazardous materials secure and away from very young or untrained children. Never store flammable liquids near a flame or spark emitting device and make sure storage areas are well ventilated.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (LEPC)

Federal and state law requires each county to establish a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). This committee works closely with the Columbia County Emergency Management Agency, maintaining the county's hazardous materials safety program.

The county hazardous materials safety program is focused on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from the unplanned release of hazardous materials. The LEPC maintains Community Right to Know records required by Section 312 of the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA Title III)

The Columbia County LEPC meets quarterly, the meetings are held during the second week of January, April, July and October. Meetings are open to the public with notices indicating the exact date, time and location of the meeting being advertised in the Press Enterprise at least one week in advance.

CHEMICAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

State law requires facilities covered by the Federal OSHA Hazard Communications Standard to file an annual Tier II chemical inventory and pay applicable fees to the County LEPC by March 1st. This requirement includes chemicals on site any time during the previous calendar year which have met or exceeded the reporting threshold.

The reporting threshold for chemicals classified as extremely hazardous is at or above the EPA's Threshold Planning Quantity (TPQ) or 500 lbs., whichever is less. The reporting threshold for hazardous materials not classified as extremely hazardous is at or above 10,000 lbs.

Facilities found in violation of chemical reporting requirements are subject to a fine, with each day the violation continues being considered a separate violation. For more information on chemical reporting requirements in Columbia County call (570) 389-5725, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 AM to 4 PM.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL (Does not apply to business and industry)

The PA Department of Environmental Protection estimates each person in the state generates on average 4 lbs of hazardous waste per year. The following guidelines apply to homes, apartments, hotels, campgrounds and picnic areas.

The best way to manage household hazardous waste is not to create it in the first place followed by recycling; if these two options are not possible than proper disposal of household waste is permissible.

- **Motor Vehicle Batteries** – should be traded in when purchasing a new one. State law requires dealers to accept old batteries in trade.
- **Motor Oil** – many repair shops and auto parts stores recycle used motor oil. If motor oil must be disposed with household trash make sure it's first absorbed by sand, cat liter, saw dust or another absorbent material before placing in a leak resistant container.
- **Paint** – open cans in a well ventilated area and let water based paint evaporate. Place the lid back on the can as the remaining solid residue can be put in the trash. Oil based paint will not evaporate it must be absorbed by sand, kitty liter, saw dust or another absorbent material before placing in a leak resistant container.
- **Fluorescent & Halogen Light Bulbs** – check to see if the store you purchased the florescent or halogen light bulbs from has a recycling program; otherwise double bag the old bulbs and place them in the trash. If you accidentally break a bulb which contains mercury, open the window and leave the room. After a few minutes re-enter, clean the broken bulb, double bag it and place it in the trash (outside).
- **Mercury Thermometers** – call the PA Department of Environmental Protection for recycling information otherwise double bag the thermometer and pack it in a coffee can with shock absorbing material and tightly seal the lid with duct tape and place in the trash.
- **Medicine** – it is not recommended that medicine be flushed down the toilet, instead mix with used coffee grinds or kitty liter before disposal with household trash.
- **Electronics** – Check with your local municipality or trash company for the availability of a recycling program otherwise keep old TV's and computers at home. Wait for an electronics recycling program to be advertised on the TV or in the newspaper. They usually occur a couple times a year, somewhere in the region within a reasonable driving distance.