



Minimizing Waste

Why be concerned?

Using the least toxic products and procedures is one of the most important ways to protect water quality. Minimizing waste is just as important. Look for opportunities to reduce the toxicity and volume of your waste whenever possible. You will not only protect the environment – you may also reduce potential liability and disposal costs.



Choosing the Least Toxic Option

First, identify potentially hazardous products and their uses. Next, look for materials and procedures that can either be eliminated completely or substituted with a less toxic alternative. For example, less hazardous options for common cleaning activities include:

- using hot water/steam cleaning methods when washing oil from metal parts.
- using non-chlorinated and aqueous compounds rather than chlorinated and petroleum-based compounds.
- using phosphate-free detergents.

When purchasing products, ask your supplier for information about less toxic alternatives. For more assistance, contact one of the agencies listed under "Getting Help."

Purchasing Power

- Buy the most durable products and parts available. Consider whether items are easily repaired, reused and/or recycled.
- Avoid disposable products and excessive packaging.
- Try to buy *only* what you need. For example, buy materials only in amounts that can be completely used in a timely manner.
- Consider hiring a contractor to perform occasional work so that unused materials don't accumulate. Whenever possible, require contractors to implement practices recommended by Community Partners for Healthy Streams.

Ideas for Using, Storing and Disposing of Products



- Recondition and reuse products, instead of buying new ones.
- Avoid routine applications. When using pesticides, acids and other chemicals outdoors, consider whether application is necessary.
- Carefully read and follow label directions: never use more product than the directions suggest.
- When possible, apply products to targeted areas *only*, versus wholesale application over a larger area.
- Maintain equipment and calibrate it frequently (including sprinklers) to prevent leaks, over-application and wind drift. Don't apply products outdoors when rain or winds are forecasted.
- Use up materials *completely* and allow containers to air dry before disposing of them. When cleaning containers and applicators, try to use methods that don't generate even more waste.
- Keep stored materials dry and contained. Label and date so that the oldest materials can be used first. For more information about storing materials and wastes, see **Series #1, Fact Sheet 1.1**.
- Separate wastes. Mixing wastes can prevent reuse and recycling. It can also cause non-hazardous materials to become hazardous – increasing both their threat to the environment and disposal costs.

• Determine whether others can use your leftover materials. If they can't be reused, recycle your wastes whenever possible. For more information about reuse and recycling, see **Series #7, Fact Sheet 7.2** or contact one of the agencies listed under "Getting Help."

Preventing Leaks and Spills

Plan ahead to prevent leaks and spills. For more information about spill prevention and clean-up, see **Series #1, Fact Sheet 1.2**.

More Ideas for Minimizing Waste

Since each business is unique, opportunities to reduce waste will vary. Common options for reducing oil, paint and solvent waste include using:

- Extended-life engine and transmission oils.
- High volume low pressure or airless paint guns.
- Cyclonic parts cleaners which spin dirt out and so extend the life of the solvent. Solvent waste can be further reduced by buying or leasing a spray gun cleaner that recirculates thinner.

When looking for ways to minimize waste, be creative. Any waste reduction that you can achieve will protect the environment by an equivalent amount. For more information about ways to reduce waste, contact one of the agencies listed under "Getting Help."

GETTING HELP

Georgia Environmental
Protection Division (GA EPD)
Hazardous Waste
Program.....(404) 656-7802
Land Protection Branch.....(404) 362-2537

Community Partners for
Healthy Streams.....(770) 528-1482