

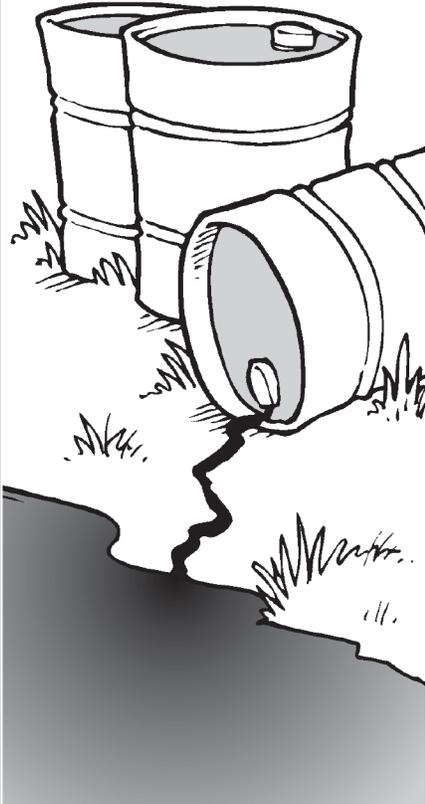


# Disposing of Wastes

## Why be concerned?

Improperly disposed of wastes don't just disappear; they may filter into our groundwater or wash off the land directly into lakes, rivers and streams.

Effective waste management is extremely important to avoid not only environmental problems, but legal ones as well. Businesses are legally responsible for their waste disposal even if it's handled by an outside contractor. And while the business owner has ultimate responsibility for disposing of wastes, employees may also be legally responsible.



## Maintaining a Litter-Free Landscape

Regularly remove debris from outdoor areas and dispose of it properly. This is especially important before rain storms and snow melts. Be sure to collect and compost landscape wastes. Leaves and other organic wastes can become pollutants if large quantities are allowed to enter surface waters.

Make sure that waste containers are conveniently placed and don't leak or overflow. (For more information about properly storing wastes, see **Series #1, Fact Sheet 1.1.**)

## Identifying Hazardous Wastes

A waste is considered hazardous if it could be dangerous to human health, property, or the environment. The EPA lists types of hazardous wastes. In general, these materials are ignitable, reactive, corrosive and/or toxic.

Hazardous products commonly used by businesses include:

- paints
- thinners
- solvents
- cleaning and polishing fluids
- coolants
- pesticides
- degreasers
- lead acid batteries
- acids/caustics
- metallic compounds
- petroleum products

If you don't know whether a waste is hazardous, contact one of the agencies listed under "Getting Help." Assume a material is hazardous until you find out otherwise. When in doubt, place the waste in a sealed, labeled container. Store it in a secure place where no one can accidentally use it prior to safe disposal.

## Determining the Best Disposal Method

First and foremost, prevent wastes (including wash water) from entering storm drains. These lead straight to local lakes, rivers and streams.

Proper disposal depends on how much waste is generated and the material's chemical properties. Even if a waste *isn't* hazardous, it may not be advisable to put it into a dumpster or the sanitary sewer. State law prohibits the landfilling of certain non-hazardous materials, such as uncontaminated soil and landscape wastes.

There are also limits on what can be discharged into the sanitary sewer. Dumping an unapproved substance into a sanitary sewer can cause explosions or other problems due to the incompatibility of chemicals.

Before disposing of wastes into a trash receptacle or the sanitary sewer, call your local landfill and/or wastewater treatment plant to make sure they can be accepted (phone numbers are listed under "Getting Help").

## Disposing of Hazardous Wastes

If a waste is hazardous, estimate how much of it you generate and accumulate: this will dictate how it can be transported and disposed of under state law. Next, contact the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) to find out whether you can transport your waste yourself or if you must use a licensed hauler. Hazardous wastes transporters must have an EPA identification number. The wastes must be delivered to a licensed treatment, storage and disposal facility (TSDF).

Be careful when deciding how to transport and dispose of wastes. As a generator, you remain legally liable for their fate “from cradle to grave.” Many waste haulers, brokers and TSDFs operate in this area. When choosing, be sure to:

- Check references. Seek referrals from businesses similar to yours.
- Make sure the hauler has a license and an EPA identification number.
- Find out if the hauler has been recently cited for violations and, if so, what changes have been made in its practices.
- Find out what steps will be taken to prevent spills (spills on the road can also be the generator’s liability), as well as the type and amount of insurance the company carries. Ask for proof of this insurance.
- Find out what will be done with your waste. It must end up at a TSDF where it can be reprocessed, recycled, blended into fuels, incinerated or taken to a special landfill. If your waste isn’t delivered to the treatment or disposal facility on the same day it’s picked up, find out where it will be stored. Whenever possible, further verify the information you receive.

Laws governing waste disposal can be confusing. For example, it’s often difficult to distinguish between the laws that apply to all hazardous *substances* and those that apply only to hazardous *wastes*. For the most current information regarding waste regulations, contact the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) Hazardous Waste Program.

## The Importance of Shipping Manifests

Shipments of liquid industrial waste must be accompanied by a uniform waste manifest signed by the generator. A manifest is also required to transport regulated amounts of hazardous waste. Be sure that waste manifests are provided when required and that they are accurate and complete.

### GETTING HELP

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

Cobb County Office of Environmental Compliance.....(770) 528-3340

Cobb County Solid Waste Management and Recycling..... (770) 581-5488

Community Partners for Healthy Streams.....(770) 419-6303