

**Take a quick look around your house and you may discover as much as 100 pounds of "household hazardous waste."**

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an average home can easily accumulate this amount of products containing potentially hazardous components.

Learn to identify household chemicals:

- **CLEANING PRODUCTS**  
bathroom, kitchen, all-purpose
- **AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS**  
motor oil, antifreeze, brake fluid
- **GARDEN & POOL SUPPLIES**  
insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, pool chemicals
- **HOBBY PRODUCTS**  
oil-based stains, photo chemicals, glues
- **PERSONAL CARE & PHARMACEUTICALS**  
mercury thermometers, nail polish remover

**Look for these words on the label: poison, danger, warning, caution, flammable, reactive, corrosive, explosive, toxic, harmful, fatal and hazardous.**

## Did you know

...The skin of older adults is thinner and more easily penetrated by liquids.

...Individuals who require the use of oxygen to assist in breathing should be aware that oxygen does not mix well with many household chemicals.

...Some individuals have poor nutrition and/or may not drink enough water to sustain a buffer needed to minimize the effects of instantaneous poisonings.

...As people age, they may develop cataracts or glaucoma, which can impair their vision. If they cannot clearly read directions, they may not use a product properly.

...Medications can temporarily affect a person's cognitive, sensory and physical ability to safely use or manage hazardous products.

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If you have a poisoning emergency, call **Pittsburgh Poison Center** at

**1.800.222.1222**

If an individual has collapsed or is not breathing,

**call 911**

## Thanks to...

### The Heinz Endowments

for its generous support of this project.

### UPMC

for its generous support of this project.

### Southwestern PA Household Hazardous Waste Task Force

(swpahhw.org) for contributing to the content of this brochure.



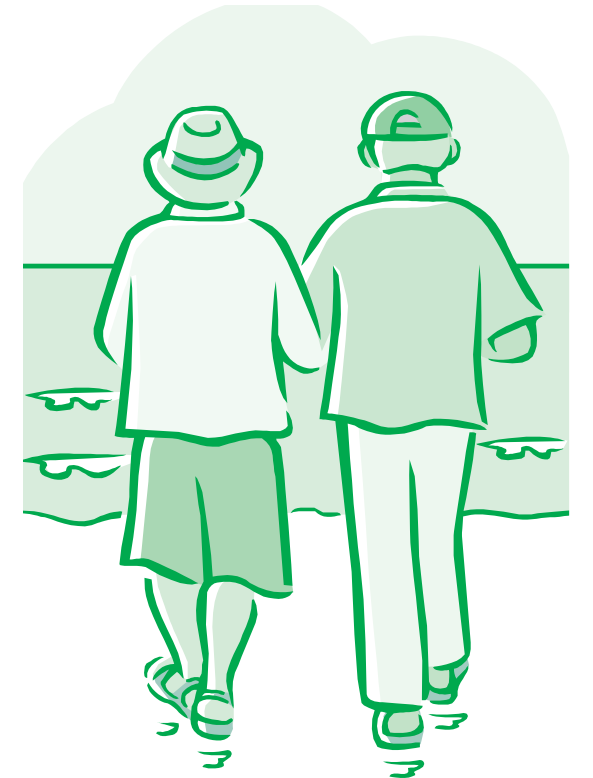
*"Working to protect the environment since 1939"*

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www.prc.org

**Pennsylvania Resources Council's** mission is *to promote conservation of our natural resources and protection of scenic beauty through public education and outreach in a collaborative effort with government agencies, business, charitable foundations and other nonprofit organizations.*

# Sure Bets for Senior Safety

**Protect older persons from potentially dangerous hazards in the home.**



A Publication of  
The Pennsylvania Resources Council

# Top 10 Home Safety Tips for Seniors

## 10) ALWAYS READ LABELS

Understand precautions and follow directions for all household chemicals and medications. ALWAYS remember to ask for help when you need it.

## 9) AVOID MIXING

Do not mix any substances together unless a label specifically states that it is safe to combine them.

## 8) KEEP IN SAFE PLACE

Store all chemicals out of reach from children and pets. NEVER store chemicals near food.

## 7) STORE IN WELL-LIT AREAS

Always make sure household chemicals – and medications – are stored in well-lit areas to avoid mix-ups.

## 6) LABEL PRODUCTS

Label all homemade cleaning formulas.

## 5) POST EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Know emergency phone numbers – such as the Pittsburgh Poison Center – and label them clearly on your phone.

## 4) USE NON-TOXIC ALTERNATIVES

Purchase non-toxic alternative products or make your own non-toxic products at home from ingredients such as baking soda and vinegar.

Special tips for those moving:

## 3) DO NOT LEAVE MATERIALS BEHIND

Do not leave any hazardous waste behind when you move. Ask for help from family or friends to clean out chemicals in the basement and storage areas.

## 2) IDENTIFY PRODUCTS IN ADVANCE

Identify which materials may be hazardous in your home, and make plans to properly dispose of them – don't wait until the last minute.

## 1) DISPOSE OF HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS

Properly dispose of leftover or unusable household chemicals at a household hazardous waste collection. Or share leftovers by asking the new homeowner – or friends and neighbors – if they can use any of the remaining products.

## Learn more

about protecting yourself and loved ones by contacting the following organizations:

### Earth 911

800-CLEANUP  
[www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org)

Provides information concerning disposal of household items.

### National Council on Aging

202-479-1200  
[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)

Serves as national voice for older Americans and the community organizations that serve them.

### Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

“Household Hazardous Waste” pages  
800-346-4242

[www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us)

Offers information concerning managing household hazardous waste.

### Pennsylvania Resources Council

412-488-7490  
[www.prc.org](http://www.prc.org)

Provides information concerning how to “reduce...reuse...recycle” including recipes for making non-toxic cleaning products.

### Pittsburgh Poison Center

800-222-1222  
[www.chp.edu/CHP/poisoncenter](http://www.chp.edu/CHP/poisoncenter)

Provides free poison information 24 hours a day.

*Note: PRC does not endorse or recommend any of the groups or organizations listed in this brochure. Individuals seeking information or services from them should fully research their qualifications and capabilities as related to their needs.*

### Southwestern PA Household Hazardous Waste Task Force

412-488-7452

[www.swpahhw.org](http://www.swpahhw.org)

Organizes HHW collection events throughout western Pennsylvania.

### The Green Guide

800-647-5463

[www.thegreenguide.com](http://www.thegreenguide.com)

Shows how to make small changes that add up to big benefits for people's wallets, their health and the planet.

### University of Pittsburgh Center for Healthy Aging

866-350-6509

[www.healthyingaging.pitt.edu](http://www.healthyingaging.pitt.edu)

Promotes healthy lifestyles and disease prevention through education, research and public service.

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

“Aging Initiative”

202-564-2188

[www.epa.gov/aging](http://www.epa.gov/aging)

Offers information on a variety of household and environmental hazards for older Americans.