

The Local Board of Health Environmental Health Primer Hazardous Waste Factsheet



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Background

- Hazardous wastes are dangerous and can cause great harm to the environment or human health. They include toxic, ignitable, corrosive, or reactive wastes.
- Hazardous wastes are regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).
- Household hazardous waste includes paint, pesticides, fertilizer, pool or spa supplies, general purpose cleaners, batteries, broken thermometers, compact fluorescent light bulbs, etc.
- Another threat can come from intentional, illegal dumping of hazardous waste. Individuals or companies who have generated the waste typically seek an inexpensive and hassle-free solution to their hazardous waste problems by literally dumping it on someone else's property.
- The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (or the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act) authorizes emergency management of hazardous chemical spills.
- The Superfund Law, or CERCLA, is used to identify contaminated hazardous waste sites, assess the types and the extent of the contamination, and place them on the National Priorities List (NPL) according to their hazard ranking or likelihood to cause harm.

Board of Health Actions

- Implement community programs for educating the public on household hazardous waste and provide collection centers or cleanup events.
- Ensure that their public health agencies offer public education and consultation regarding the control of household and industrial wastes.
- Become involved in decisions and policies concerning Superfund sites in their area and emergency response planning activities.
- Investigate whether there are any instances of environmental injustice involving hazardous waste occurring in their communities.

Resources for Continuing Education

- National Association of Local Boards of Health. (2011). Hazardous Waste. In *The Local Board of Health Environmental Health Primer* (2nd ed.).
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. Solid Waste and Emergency Response. Available at <http://www.epa.gov/swerrims/>

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