

# Household Hazardous Waste Program Guidance

## Who We Are and What We Do

Leaders responsible for efficiently and effectively implementing county solid waste programs across Washington State are the members of the Washington Association of County Solid Waste Managers (WACSWM). They are the professionals who manage and operate these vital systems every day.

Counties have a duty under state law to manage the proper collection and disposal of wastes, including recycling. To achieve these outcomes, counties work hard to encourage recycling and waste reduction while properly disposing of remaining wastes, including household hazardous waste (HHW). County solid waste programs are a critical public service that protects the environment and human health.



- ✓ Solid Waste Programs
- ✓ Managing Waste Streams
- ✓ Sustainable Recycling

## The Problem

Understanding which everyday items are considered HHW is confusing. *Knowing where and how to dispose of them is even more challenging.*

Most consumers are confused about which common household items are potentially hazardous and should not be thrown in the trash. It is not always obvious that an item is considered HHW, rather than just regular garbage. Sometimes it is not clear how to properly dispose of an item when necessary.

There is little consistency between counties for residents to dispose of HHW properly. Some counties have permanent facilities to collect HHW, but many do not. For those that do have physical, dedicated sites, hours of operation may not be convenient. In some counties and for some items, collection events are scheduled once or more per year. These events provide an opportunity for residents to dispose of HHW properly. But they also require them to be aware

the event is happening, take the time to participate, and stockpile HHW until the event takes place.

Residents are also likely to discover that some counties accept certain items but not others. Today, there is wide variation in what HHW commodities are allowed for disposal from county to county. For instance, residents may find they can properly dispose of an empty propane tank in one county but not in a neighboring county.



**As a result, we cannot achieve the environmental and public health protection our state needs.**

