



*County of York*  
*Environmental and Development Services*

Division of Solid Waste Management  
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### **Safe Alternatives to Household Chemical Products**

The best way to protect your family and the environment from potentially harmful household chemicals is not to use them in the first place! However, if you do use them, here are some tips for using them in the safest manner:

- ✓ ALWAYS read the label! Label instructions and/or warnings tell you if a product is potentially harmful to you, your family, and/or the environment, as well as how to use, store and dispose of it properly.
- ✓ ALWAYS keep products in their original container and store them safely away from children and pets.
- ✓ ALWAYS dispose of household chemical products safely by participating in York County's Household Chemical Collection events!
- ✗ NEVER pour harmful household products down a sink, toilet or bathtub drain unless the product is strictly made for that purpose
- ✗ NEVER pour products like used oil or pesticides on the ground or into ditches or storm drains.
- ✗ NEVER mix chemical wastes or reuse any pesticide or chemical container for any other purpose – residues that remain in the containers can contaminate other materials.

Try the list below for a few safer alternatives to common household chemical products. Using these economical, homemade substitutes will not only help make your home a safer place, but you'll be doing your part to save the environment and will also save some money in the process!

- ➔ **All Purpose Cleaners:** Mix 3 tablespoons of washing soda in one quart of warm water, or use baking soda and a small amount of water. Baking soda also makes for a great "scouring pad"!
- ➔ **Glass/Window Cleaners:** Mix equal amounts of water and white vinegar in a spray bottle.
- ➔ **Furniture Polish:** For unfinished wood, mix 1 teaspoon lemon oil in 1 pint mineral oil and wipe on wood with reusable cloth rag. For finished furniture, mix 2 parts olive oil or vegetable oil with 1 part lemon juice. Polish with a soft reusable cloth. Or polish with a cloth dipped in olive, soybean or raw linseed oil.
- ➔ **Room/Rug Deodorizer:** Sprinkle carpets liberally with baking soda and vacuum after 15 minutes.
- ➔ **Drain Cleaner:** Prevent clogs by covering drains with screens to keep out grease, food scraps and hair. Never pour fats or bulky solids down the drain. To loosen a blockage, mix 1 cup each of baking soda, salt and white vinegar and pour down the drain. Wait 15 minutes, and then flush drain thoroughly with boiling water. Use a plunger or plumber's snake for serious clogs.
- ➔ **Ant and Roach Spray:** Sprinkle boric acid (sold in powder form). A 50:50 mix of boric acid and brown sugar is also effective. Keep away from pets and children.
- ➔ **Chemical Fertilizers:** Use organic materials such as compost, peat moss, and fish meal.