



## Priority actions for chemicals use...

### Everyday things you can do

- Store chemicals safely – make sure containers are clearly labelled and out of the reach of children.
- Reduce the use of household and outdoor chemicals by buying less, and using less. Only buy what you need – enough for the job at hand.
- Look for safer alternatives. For example, find non-toxic ways of repelling pests. Use mouse or rat traps instead of baits to get rid of rodents. For pets, try less toxic treatments to help keep fleas at bay.
- Change your gardening habits – go organic to minimise the use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Use a biodegradable laundry detergent made without phosphates or petrochemicals that doesn't contain optical brighteners or enzymes. Avoid having clothing or other items dry cleaned where tetrachloroethylene is used as the primary cleaning solvent.
- Take special care if you're building or renovating. Before you buy products such as paint, solvents, varnishes, sealants or glues find out if you can buy a safer alternative instead. If you can't avoid using products that contain potentially harmful chemicals take every precaution to protect yourself and others from exposure.
- Regularly clean out the places where you store household, garden or work-based chemicals. Check how chemicals are stored for any signs of leaks or damage to containers and make sure container lids are tightly sealed.
- Make sure all chemicals are correctly labelled and are not stored beyond their recommended shelf life.
- Never mix chemicals – they could react with one another and produce toxic fumes. Always read the manufacturer's label and pay attention to any safety instructions and warnings. Follow instructions about use, storage and disposal and wear appropriate protective gear if it's recommended.
- Dispose of or recycle chemicals you don't need with great care.
- Take unwanted household chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, hobby chemicals and poisons to a free Household Chemical Collection event in your local area. Contact your council for information about the next CleanOut day.





## Priority actions for chemicals use... (cont'd)

- Donate unwanted paint to a community group or someone who can use it. Keep stored paint tins sealed properly to prevent spilling or drying out.
- Take used motor oils, fuels and fluids to a participating service station for recycling.
- Take unwanted medicines to any pharmacy for free and safe disposal.
- Give unwanted pool chemicals to a friend or neighbour – as a last option take them to a chemical collection.
- Dispose of old mobile phones and their batteries through a recycling program, such as MobileMuster.
- Never pour unwanted oils or chemicals into gutters, drains or toilets. They could end up in the stormwater system where they'd flow directly into our waterways.
- Make sure chemicals are never allowed to be absorbed into the ground – they could contaminate the soil or ground water.
- Never put chemicals in a recycling bin – they could harm people who sort these materials, contaminate the recyclable materials, or end up in landfill, which can harm the environment.
- If there is no alternative, wrap unwanted chemical containers in several layers of newspaper and seal them in a plastic bag before placing them in the garbage bin.
- Reduce the use of hazardous and dangerous materials at work. For example, choose water-based, plant-based, biodegradable and non-toxic paints, strippers, cleaners, degreasers and pest repellents wherever possible. Investigate options for recycling chemicals such as solvents.
- If you're responsible for large quantities of hazardous chemicals, make sure unwanted chemicals or a licensed contractor disposes of liquid wastes lawfully.
- Never mix different types of liquid wastes. Talk to WorkCover NSW if you need advice about handling or disposal. Report spills immediately and follow workplace procedures for clean-up.

### How can I find out more?

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