Household Hazardous Waste: For Your Health and Environment’s Sake

The situation

Owyhee County residents generate about 8 to 21 tons of solid waste per year and Ada county residents generate about 213 to 581 tons. Included in this mountain of waste are household substances such as food, packaging, newspapers, leftovers from home maintenance activities, appliances, motor oil, yard wastes, phone books, and household hazardous waste.

What are we doing with our leftover paint and paint thinner, used household batteries, motor oil, solvent based cleaners, and household pesticides? Are they going down the drain or on the ground, burned, or placed in the garbage?

Although there may be few alternatives for safely disposing of these products, using wise waste management and disposal techniques can protect our health and environment. Contamination of ground water, surface water, soil and air can sometimes be traced to improper disposal of household hazardous wastes.

Environmental monitoring has shown that even landfills in rural areas that do not receive industrial waste can produce runoff and leachate containing chemical compounds that may be hazardous.

Although it’s hard to detect exact contamination sources, it is assumed that some of these chemicals came to the landfill from households.

Achievements

Consumers became more aware of household hazardous waste and the related health and environmental issues in Idaho. Participants included 19 Ada club leaders, 130 homemaker club members, and 38 Owyhee consumers. They learned to identify alternatives available for safer selection, storage, and disposal of potentially hazardous household products.

All participants took a look at their personal situation and are developing practices for appropriate action. Participants reported that as a result of this program they would:

- 88% Read labels for key words
- 87% Buy only what they need
- 92% Recycle leftover waste
- 94% Use up or give to others to use up products
- 89% Use safer disposal methods

Participants gained Knowledge on three aspects of the household hazardous waste issue:

- Becoming more aware of potentially hazardous household products.
- Increasing knowledge about safe selection, storage, and disposal of potentially hazardous household products.
• adopting management practices for selection, storage and disposal of potentially hazardous products.

We make the difference!

For more information
Beverly Healy
(208) 896-4104
Marilyn Shinn
(208) 377-2107