



HAZARDOUS MATERIALS STORAGE

As many of you know, in early August, we had a house fire in Wixom which can be attributed to the improper storage of household items. When products that require ventilation are improperly stored and not vented, heat can be created. If the amount of heat created causes one or both products to reach ignition temperature (self ignite) spontaneous combustion occurs. This was the case with the August fire. To spare you the same tragic results, the Fire Department would like to share some important information.

Residents should not store any dangerous substances (as well as those that are subject to spontaneous combustion) within their homes or attached garages but rather at least 10 feet away from their dwelling entirely, preferably in an external building such as a secure detached garage, shed, etc. If impractical, materials should be stored in a fire-proof cabinet. Flammable vapors are typically heavier than air and that is why flammable liquids and other fuels should be stored in an approved container on the bottom shelf or below eye level and away from open flames.

Many families store chemicals and cleaning supplies in a garage or basement, and while those may not be high traffic areas for family members, it is important to store and handle chemicals correctly, wherever they are. According to the State of Home Safety in America™ (2002), household chemicals caused more than 45,000 emergency room visits in a single year. The following guidelines are recommended when storing and handling dangerous products, including, but not limited to, gasoline, pool chemicals and pesticides:

- Use child-resistant caps on dangerous products, including those stored in the garage, such as pesticides, automotive fluids, charcoal lighter, paint thinner, antifreeze, and turpentine. Ideally, hazardous products should be stored in a locked cabinet.
- Buy only what you need to avoid having left over products.
- Store all products in their original containers and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Read the use and storage directions before using products. Original labels on product containers often give important first-aid information.

- When using harsh products follow safety recommendations, such as wearing gloves and masks. Do not mix products - together their contents could react with dangerous results.
- Never transfer poisonous or caustic products to drinking glasses, pop bottles, or other food containers, which could be mistaken and the contents consumed.
- Store only a small amount of gasoline, in a garage or shed, and always in an approved, vented container designed and labeled for gasoline. Because of its highly volatile flammable vapors, gasoline must never be brought indoors. Propane, kerosene and lamp oils should be considered and handled in the same manner.
- Fertilizers and Pesticides are extremely hazardous – consider substituting non-poisonous insecticides whenever possible. If you choose not to use non-poisonous materials, again store them according to the manufacturer's recommendations, in the original containers and read the directions for important first-aid information.
- Mix insect sprays outdoors, away from areas used by your family and pets.
- Store and use pool chemicals according to the manufacturer's directions, always in tightly covered original containers, in a dry place. Keep these away from other chemicals and products.

Dispose of unwanted hazardous materials at scheduled Household Hazardous Waste Day (HHWD) events. The next event for our area is Saturday, September 26, 2009 at the Novi Civic Center from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For a complete listing of HHWD events please visit <http://www.rrrasoc.org/>

The following website also contains more interesting information regarding storage of chemicals, gardening products, etc.
<http://sdces.sdstate.edu/south2/Horticulture/AB/columns/10.25.06.htm>