

Oh,
what a
waste!

the garage

Alternatives to common household toxics

Missoula City-County Health Department
Missoula Valley Water Quality District
Missoula Wastewater Treatment Plant

Thanks to the Montana Natural History Center and
Greenpeace for the information on alternatives

ALTERNATIVES

Automotive

MOTOR OIL

Recycled motor oil is available for purchase in the Missoula area. It meets the same industry standards as virgin oil, but saves our natural resources.

Missoula area residents can drop off used motor oil at the following locations (a fee of \$0.25 to \$0.30 per gallon is standard):

- * Express Lube
- * Lube and Oil Plus Center
- * Ozzie's Oil Company
- * Hellgate Conoco

In addition, BFI has a residential curbside collection program for used oil. Call 543-3157 for more information.

ANTIFREEZE

Spilled antifreeze attracts animals because of its sweet smell and taste. However, it is very toxic. When swallowed, it can poison, even kill, pets or young children. Less toxic antifreeze is now available in many area stores.

Do not pour antifreeze on the ground. Recycle used antifreeze at these locations:

- * Express Lube
- * Hellgate Conoco
- * Ozzie's Oil Company

ALTERNATIVES

Automotive

WINDSHIELDS

For routine cleaning:

In a spray bottle, mix together
3 Tbsp. vinegar
1 quart warm water
OR

1/2 cup ammonia
1/8 cup vinegar
1 quart very warm water

Spray onto windshield and dry with loosely crumpled newspaper.

For dirty windows:

First wash with soap and water, then use one of the solutions described above.

CAR BATTERIES

Corrosion removal

Use baking soda and water. The corrosion is extremely acidic. Be careful not to get any on hands or clothes.

Disposal

Car batteries contain a lot of lead, a heavy metal known to cause a variety of health problems. The best way to get rid of an old battery is to recycle it. Look under "Recycling Services" in the Yellow Pages for drop off points.

ALTERNATIVES

Automotive

SOLVENTS

A solvent is a substance, usually a liquid, capable of dissolving other substances. Not all solvents are bad: for instance, water is a common solvent. The ones we want to avoid are those made with petrochemicals, especially when they are chlorinated. These solvents have been chemically altered and are not found anywhere in nature. The addition of chlorine makes the solvent more stable and often less flammable. However, this stability means the substance is slow to break down into non-toxic components when discarded. To make matters worse, these solvents can be extremely toxic, even at low concentrations.

Due to their toxicity and persistence in the environment, chlorinated solvents are a major threat to the Missoula Valley Aquifer. Even small amounts washed into the sewers, septic systems and storm drains can impact our sole source of drinking water.

Fortunately, alternatives are available! Many local businesses carry non-chlorinated brands of these solvents:

- * brake cleaners
- * engine degreasers
- * aerosol lubricants
- * spot removers
- * paint strippers and thinners

ALTERNATIVES

Automotive

CARPETS:

2 parts cornmeal
1 part borax

Sprinkle liberally on carpet, leave for 1 hour, then vacuum.

For tougher stains:

Repeatedly blot with vinegar in soapy water.

For red wine spills:

Blot with white wine and warm, soapy water.

To deodorize:

Sprinkle carpet with baking powder, then vacuum.

METAL CLEANERS

Chrome

Rub with undiluted vinegar. Rinse and polish with a dry cloth.

Stainless steel

Rub metal with a paste of baking soda and water. Rinse and polish with a dry cloth.

Aluminum

Dip a soft cloth in lemon juice and rinse with warm water, or soak the cloth overnight in a mixture of vinegar and water. Wring cloth and rub the metal. Rinse and polish with a dry cloth.

ALTERNATIVES

Workshop

PAINTS

Use water-based (latex) paints instead of oil-based paints. Latex paints can be cleaned up with water instead of solvents. If you must use a solvent, make sure it is not chlorinated.

When removing old paint, wear a mask and scrape or sand as much paint as possible, to reduce the need for solvents. Some old paint contains lead. Sanding lead paint creates dangerous lead dust and can cause lead poisoning. If your house was built before 1978, it may have lead paint. Local hardware stores carry lead detection kits, so you can test the paint before you begin scraping. If you detect lead paint, contact the Health Department (523-4755) for more information.

HAND CLEANER

For paint or grease

Use baby oil or margarine, then wash with soap and water. Avoid solvent-based commercial cleaners. Several good citrus-based cleaners are on the market.

The Health Department, Water Quality District and Wastewater Treatment Plant do not make any warranty, expressed or implied, or assume any responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any of the suggestions listed in this