



NEWS RELEASE

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MMSB Announces Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program for 2008

The Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister of Environment and Conservation, reminds residents that the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board's (MMSB) 2008 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Program is now underway. The program provides a safe and convenient means of properly disposing of household hazardous waste, while raising awareness and educating the general public about the dangers associated with improper disposal of this waste.

"On average, every Newfoundlander and Labradorian generates seven litres of household hazardous waste every year," said Minister Johnson. "While this may not appear to be a significant amount, it only takes a few drops of hazardous waste to contaminate our water supplies. Proper disposal of such waste through the MMSB's collection program gives residents a safe, convenient and environmentally friendly means to dispose of these materials."

This year's HHW program will provide 19 collection events in 13 areas of the province: Bay Roberts, Carbonear Area, Conception Bay South, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Burin Peninsula, Mount Pearl, Paradise, Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, Stephenville, and Torbay Area. The City of St. John's and Labrador City/Wabush facilitate their own HHW collection events. In addition, the Green Bay Waste Management Authority operates a permanent HHW collection depot for the region in which it operates.

"Through valued partnerships with the participating municipalities, MMSB is pleased to continue to provide this important waste diversion service to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador," said MMSB Chair and CEO, John Scott. "Since 1998, we have experienced great success with the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program, diverting more than 623,000 litres of HHW from our waste disposal sites," added Mr. Scott.

The HHW Program funds community collection events once or twice a year in those areas where meaningful volumes of HHW waste can be diverted and recycled in a cost-effective manner. MMSB and the participating municipalities cost-share all expenses associated with the collection events so that the service can be made available to residents and households at no charge. MMSB will be investing \$250,000 in this initiative in 2008 through the Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Trust Fund.

Specific dates and locations for this year's HHW collection events will be advertised locally as they are finalized. A complete schedule of events, as well as a detailed list of materials accepted through the program, is also available on MMSB's web site at www.mmsb.nl.ca.

In addition to providing Newfoundland and Labradorians with safe disposal options for HHW, MMSB has also produced public education guides to assist communities in developing their own HHW programs and to provide residents with information about safe usage and disposal of HHW. Both guides are available by contacting MMSB at 1-800-901-MMSB (6672) or online at www.mmsb.nl.ca.

MMSB is a provincial Crown agency that reports to the Minister of Environment and Conservation. Its mandate is to support progressive waste management practices in the province, with a particular focus on waste diversion, recycling and public education, in order to ensure a clean and healthy environment throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

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BACKGROUND

Household Hazardous Waste Program

MMSB has delivered a provincial HHW program since 1998 with funding sourced from the Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Trust Fund. The HHW program provides safe hazardous waste collection for participating municipalities, raises awareness among the general public of household hazardous waste issues, and helps establish progressive waste management partnerships with participating communities. This program plays an important role in reducing the amount of hazardous wastes going to waste disposal sites. Since 1998, more than 623,000 litres of HHW, ranging from pesticides to leaded paint, have been collected.

Why should I be concerned?

It takes mere drops of household hazardous waste (HHW) to contaminate a drinking water source, and each person generates more than seven litres of HHW each year.

Problems arise when HHW users dispose of residuals down drains or storm sewers. HHW may corrode plumbing and cause failures in septic systems, and can contaminate harbours and coastal waters.

In a landfill, HHW can seep into soil and water and may be transferred to humans, pets, or wildlife that consume contaminated food or water.

When HHW waste is burned, harmful chemicals are released into the atmosphere. These chemicals resettle or return in precipitation to both land and water.

When HHW is disposed of in regular garbage, waste workers are at risk of eye injuries or chemical burns. Inhaling or absorbing chemical fumes may also cause temporary or permanent injury. Also, when in close proximity to one another, certain chemicals may interact in an undesirable way causing fires or explosions that could injure people, damage property and equipment, or result in forest fires.

How can I be a responsible HHW user?

Whenever possible, use a non-hazardous alternative. Environmentally friendly and safer alternatives are often available for household cleaning, home improvement, and garden care.

Also, be a wise consumer - purchase only the amount of product you need.

If you do use a hazardous product (or have any on hand), make sure to use it all or give the remainder to someone who can.

Bring any HHW residuals to a special HHW collection event or HHW drop-off site if available in your area.

What can I do with my HHW?

Although permanent HHW drop-off facilities are limited at the present time, there are ways that we can safely dispose of some of our HHW. Some examples of potential recycling and safe disposal options are:

- Metal recyclers may accept empty propane cylinders, automotive lead acid batteries, empty aerosol cans (no longer under pressure), and dry, empty paint cans.
- Propane dealers may take back old empty propane cylinders.
- Rechargeable batteries are accepted through the Charge Up To Recycle Program. Call 1-800-8-BATTERY or visit www.rbrc.org.
- Consumers can return used lubricating, crankcase, gear oil, and transmission fluid to the point-of-purchase or designated return facilities, free of charge.
- Pharmacies may accept unwanted medications and medical sharps.