

The State Fire Marshal's Office Reminds Tennesseans to Store Residential Hazardous Materials Safely

NASHVILLE, TN – Hazardous materials are not reserved for chemical factories; households across Tennessee are full of these items. Automotive fluids, barbecue products, household cleaners, oil-based paint, paint thinners, and medical equipment such as oxygen tanks can all be considered hazardous materials. These materials can pose serious fire, health or environmental risks to residents.

“Whether it’s a can of hairspray or a cylinder of propane, items around the house can pose risks for improper use or even injury,” said State Fire Marshal Commissioner Julie Mix McPeak. “It’s important to properly store, use and dispose of these items to protect yourself and your family from potential injuries.”

The State Fire Marshal's Office offers the following tips to help Tennesseans minimize exposure to unnecessary risks:

- Buy only the amount of product that you need to reduce the quantity of hazardous materials in your household.
- Familiarize yourself with each product, its location and purpose.
- Follow use and storage instructions on the product's label. Mixing some products can create deadly poisonous fumes or cause fires.
- Store hazardous materials in their original containers.
- Use only portable storage containers listed by an independent testing laboratory for flammables and combustibles.
- Store flammable products - such as gasoline, kerosene, propane gas, and paint thinner - away from the home.
- Only fill portable gasoline containers outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Place the container on the ground to fill.
- Never store flammables in direct sunlight, near an open flame or heat source.
- Inspect storage areas regularly for leaky containers, poor ventilation and the smell of fumes.
- Store hazardous materials out of the reach of children and pets.
- Use guardrails and safety locks on shelves and cabinets to prevent containers from tipping over or falling out.
- Wear suitable protective clothing including gloves and eyewear as recommended by the product manufacturer.

According to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), the average home in Tennessee produces 20 pounds of household hazardous waste each year. Because household hazardous waste material is considered flammable, toxic, reactive and/or corrosive, it should not be placed with regular garbage.

TDEC operates several hazardous waste collection sites throughout the state for the safe disposal of potentially hazardous materials. Typical items to dispose of include cleaning fluids, pesticides, mercury thermometers and thermostats, swimming pool chemicals, paint thinner and automotive fluids. For more information about these locations and TDEC's Household Hazardous Waste program, visit the department's website at www.tn.gov/environment/swm/hhw.

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