



**Enviromental Rules
and Regulations:
A summary of useful
information for Lake
County residents**

Lake County State's Attorney's Office

(847) 377-3000

18 North County Street

Waukegan, IL 60085

www.lakecountyiil.gov/StatesAttorney

Introduction

The devastating effects of hazardous wastes and oil spills are commonly reported in the news. What is not so obvious is that many materials that we use every day also contribute to environmental problems. Illinois passed its Environmental Protection Act in 1970 to safeguard the environment and public health and welfare.

Illinois' environmental laws include regulations regarding the proper handling and disposal of many common household materials. In addition to general provisions covering water, land and air pollution, the Environmental Protection Act also includes specific provisions targeted at tires, construction waste, landscape waste and electronics.

Statewide, the environmental regulations are enforced by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Attorney General. In addition, the Lake County Health Department has been authorized to enforce certain environmental regulations. The Lake County State's Attorney's Office prosecutes violations of the environmental regulations.

This brochure provides a brief overview of the requirements for the proper handling and disposal of common household items. It is important to note that depending on the nature of the activity, there may be additional rules and regulations that apply when a business is involved. This brochure also provides contact information to report any of these items being improperly handled or disposed.

This project was supported by Grant # 2007-DJ-BX-0084, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, or the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Permitted Activities

Many kinds of waste disposal require a permit or approval from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. In addition to the general regulatory requirements, the permit will include specific criteria.

Landfills: Odors are one of the more noticeable problems of landfills. Odors that are noticeable off-site are potentially a violation of the landfill's operating permit. Report violations to the Lake County Health Department Solid Waste Program.

Compost Facilities: Composting materials from other sites without a permit is a violation of environmental regulations; materials that are not properly handled can result in offsite odors.

Illegal Dumping

Items that have outlived their usefulness and cannot be recycled must be properly disposed of in a permitted landfill. However, it is not uncommon to see items dumped on the side of the road, in ravines or on vacant property. This type of activity is referred to as "open dumping." Open dumping poses a threat to public health and the environment and is illegal.

Both the land owner and the generator of the waste are responsible for preventing open dumping. If a cleanup is ordered on private lands, the property owner may be responsible for any costs incurred for the cleanup and may be required to pay a penalty.

The following are guidelines for safe and efficient means to dispose of household waste that cannot be disposed of with everyday garbage.

Electronics

Starting January 1, 2012, electronic products will be banned from landfills and cannot be discarded in general household garbage. This ban specifically includes, but is not limited to: televisions, monitors, computers, keyboards, printers, facsimile machines, portable music players, gaming systems, cable converter boxes and video cassette and DVD players and recorders. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's website includes a list of banned items.

Working equipment should be donated to a charitable organization. Alternatively, electronic items can be recycled. The Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO) regularly conducts electronic collection events and its website provides information on other locations that accept electronics for recycling:
www.swalco.org.

Appliances

Appliances include refrigerators, freezers, ranges, water heaters, air conditioners, humidifiers and similar items. These items have components such as mercury switches, chlorofluorocarbon (CFC), refrigerant gas (Freon) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) which must be removed prior to any means of disposal. It is best to take appliances to a scrap yard where the metal can be reclaimed. Appliances can only be discarded in a landfill that participates in the Illinois EPA's Industrial Material Exchange Service and has an approved operating plan and permit for appliance disposal.

Products Containing Mercury

Mercury can be found in thermometers, electrical switches, relays in thermostats and space heaters, and high-efficiency compact fluorescent light bulbs. These items should be taken to a SWALCO Household Chemical Waste Collection event – not discarded in household garbage. Some retail stores that sell high efficiency compact fluorescent light bulbs will accept used bulbs for recycling.

Landscape Waste

It is illegal to place landscape waste into household garbage, or to dispose of it in landfills. Landscape waste must be handled on the property from which it was generated – it cannot be taken to or dumped on another property. One option is to take landscape waste to an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency permitted compost facility or a landscape waste transfer station. There are many environmentally friendly options for handling landscape waste:

- Use cut grass and leaves on the lawn as fertilizer.
- Use clippings and wood chips in planting beds.
- Participate in landscape waste collections.

- Make an on-site, well-maintained household compost bin and use compost as fertilizer.

Batteries

Old lead-acid motor vehicle batteries are also banned from landfills. They can be exchanged for new ones upon purchase, or can be sold to a salvage yard or recycling center.

Alkaline batteries can be discarded in household garbage but should be taken to a SWALCO electronics collection event.

Rechargeable batteries contain numerous hazardous elements and should not be discarded in household garbage. Rechargeable batteries can be taken to a SWALCO household chemical waste collection event or a SWALCO electronics collection event, or many retailers participate in a recycling and collection program. You can find collection locations online at: www.call2recycle.org.

Used Motor Oil

Just one gallon of used motor oil can contaminate one million gallons of fresh water. Similarly, a small concentration of oil can hinder the water treatment process when poured down the drain. Used motor oil should be saved in a leak-proof container and taken to a recycling center or SWALCO Household Chemical Waste Collection event in order for it to be properly discarded. Refer to SWALCO's website for information on oil recycling centers and household chemical waste collection events. Do not dump used oil in the street or alleyway, on the ground, or down the sewer. Do not use oil for dust control.

Used Tires

Used tires pose special problems in waste management because they are large and do not easily degrade or decompose. If left outside, they can be breeding grounds for mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus. It is illegal to burn, abandon or dump used tires, or to dispose of them in a landfill. As part of a special Illinois program to keep used tires out of landfills, tire retailers are required to accept old tires for recycling when selling

new tires. Alternatively, some tire retailers or scrap yards will take used tires for a fee.

Asbestos

Asbestos was common in home building materials before the 1980s because it was effective insulation. If materials contain more than 1% of asbestos, they are considered **asbestos-containing materials (ACM)** and can be either friable (easily broken up, easy contamination) or non-friable.

It is important to be aware of household ACM so that it can be properly maintained. If friable ACM is present, you should check regularly for damage so that it can be repaired by a professional.

Leaving ACM untouched is often the safest way to handle this material. Prior to renovating or demolishing any part of the structure, hire a qualified inspector to examine for ACM. Asbestos should be removed by a licensed contractor prior to demolition or renovation activities that disturb ACM.

Construction Debris

Construction debris is created from repairing or remodeling structures or roads, doing hard landscaping, or working on pavement and driveways. Construction debris is also created from activities that involve soil removal and include uncontaminated, broken concrete. It is illegal to dump construction debris.

The **rule of thumb** for construction debris is:

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Landfill

Reduce the amount of Construction and Demolition (C&D) debris you generate. Carefully estimate the amount of raw materials needed for your project.

Reuse C&D debris, such as bricks, rock, stone and concrete without protruding metal bars. If allowed by local zoning, these materials can be used as below-grade fill material outside of a setback zone. But remember to:

- Cover it with sufficient uncontaminated soil to support vegetation within 30 days after completion of filling.

- Cover it with a road or structure. C&D materials such as broken concrete without protruding metal bars can be used for erosion control and other purposes.

Recycle wood, asphalt, concrete, corrugated cardboard, aluminum, and other metals. Take materials to a bona fide recycler or a recycling facility that is permitted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Otherwise, the generator, hauler, and property owner where the material is placed may be subject to penalties.

Landfill should be a disposal of last resort. First determine if the landfill accepts C&D debris.

Paint

Oil-based paints should be discarded at SWALCO-sponsored Household Chemical Waste Collection events.

Latex paints are not toxic and can go in household garbage if the paint is dried or absorbed with ground corn cobs or cat litter. Latex paint can also be recycled, for a fee, at various locations in Lake County. Refer to SWALCO's website for more information.

Lead-based paints are not specifically regulated under environmental laws, but removal of lead-based paint must be done carefully to prevent lead from getting into the air, water and soil. Waste from the removal of lead-based paint can be discarded in a landfill.

Paint Cleaning Materials such as paint thinners, turpentine, mineral spirits, and other solvents may not be poured down the drain. Instead:

- Place used turpentine or mineral spirits in a closed container until paint particles settle then pour off clear liquid into a container to reuse.
- Drop off unwanted paint cleaning materials at a SWALCO household chemical collection event.

Resources

To report a violation of open dumping or the violation of a permit, call the Solid Waste Enforcement Program in the Lake County Health Department: (847) 377-8020

To report odors from a landfill or compost facility, call the Lake County Solid Waste Program's dedicated odor complaint phone line: (847) 377-8096

For information on Household Chemical Waste collections and battery/electronics collections in Lake County, go to the website of the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County: www.swalco.org

For more information about environmental rules and regulations visit the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's website: www.epa.state.il.us

For more information about Household Hazardous Waste Collection sites, visit: www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste

Lake County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

(847) 244-3140

www.lakebar.org/find-a-lawyer

Lake County Health Department

(847) 377-8000

www.lakecountyl.gov/health