

## What Can You Do?

Pollution prevention starts with you! There are simple actions you can take at home to protect your health and the environment from toxic chemicals found in common household products.

- Never dump household chemicals down the sink or toilet
- Bring unwanted household chemicals to a Waste Depot
- Use safer cleaners like baking soda, vinegar and lemon juice
- Avoid using chemical fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn
- Buy eco-friendly products by looking for the Environmental Choice logo



The Detroit River Canadian Cleanup is a partnership between the government, industry, scientists, environmental organizations, and dedicated citizens (like you!) working together to protect and restore the Detroit River ecosystem. Our ultimate goal is to remove the Detroit River from the list of Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Areas of Concern.

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## How do household hazardous chemicals get into the Detroit River?

### Household Drains

Many contaminants enter the river through our own household drains when they are improperly disposed or excreted in our urine. These drains lead to septic systems or municipal sewage treatment plants which are only equipped to remove feces, urine and toilet paper and not hazardous chemicals or pharmaceuticals from waste water.

**TIP** Bring your unused or expired medication to your local pharmacy for disposal; never flush them down the toilet!

### Storm Drains

Storm drains, found next to curbs on streets outside of our homes, carry snow melt and rainwater away. These drains also carry runoff and contaminants from your driveway and lawn including soaps, oils, and fertilizers. Storm drains lead directly (untreated) to a nearby body of water such as the Detroit River.

**TIP** Don't wash your car on your driveway/street. Instead, go to a car wash that recycles the water and sends it to a sanitary sewer.

## Disposing Household Waste Properly

There are two locations in Essex County that accept household waste free of charge. Items should be placed in a hard-sided container to prevent spills and ensure safe transport.

### Household Chemical Waste Depots

#### Windsor

3450 North Service Rd E  
**1-800-563-3377**



#### Kingsville

2021 Albuna Townline  
**519-326-2816**



Contact the Essex Solid Waste Authority at [www.ewswa.org](http://www.ewswa.org) or **1-800-563-3377** for a list of accepted items and hours of operation.

### Electronic Waste Disposal

Bring your unwanted electronics to the Depots above or donate to *Computers for Kids* (4150 Sandwich Street, Windsor). Large volumes? Call **519-253-KIDS** for pick up. Don't forget to clear your personal information prior to drop-off.



# Protecting our River from your Household Chemical Waste

[www.detroitriver.ca](http://www.detroitriver.ca)

## Household Chemical Waste

Many common household products contain chemicals that pose a threat to humans and the environment when used or discarded improperly. They should **never** be thrown into the garbage or poured down the sink, toilet, or storm drain. Once you are done with a household chemical product, the leftover or unused portion should be taken to a proper disposal facility (see reverse).

Check your home for household chemical items. Here are a few examples:

- Expired or unwanted medication
- Pesticides, flea sprays and collars
- Paints, stains, thinners and acids
- Drain cleaners
- Pool chemicals
- Car products (motor oil, antifreeze, soaps)
- Gas, kerosene, diesel and propane tanks
- Mercury items (thermometers, thermostats, CFL bulbs)

## Chemicals of Emerging Concern

Certain chemicals in everyday products are now being found in the environment at an increasing rate. They're known as "Chemicals of Emerging Concern" because little is known about their potential adverse effects at low levels on human health and the ecosystem.

Examples include:

- **Medications:** antibiotics, birth control, blood pressure pills, and pain relievers
- **Pesticides:** flea collars, insect sprays, lawn/garden products
- **Perfumes:** detergents, shampoos, air fresheners, styling products
- **Perfluorinated surfactants:** stain and stick-resistant materials on non-stick cookware, dental floss, denture cleaners
- **Alkylphenolic substances:** sudsing agents in liquid detergents, toothpastes, spot removers, as well as spermicides, cosmetics, & hair colourants

## Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products

Pharmaceuticals (prescription, over-the-counter and veterinary drugs) and personal care products (soaps, fragrances, cosmetics) are the source of many chemicals of emerging concern now found in our environment. These chemicals are linked to reproductive problems in fish and aquatic wildlife and the promotion of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to remove these compounds from the water.

50-90%

of the ingredients in medications are not absorbed by our bodies - we eliminate them in our urine then into the sewer system.

## Mercury

Although naturally occurring, mercury is toxic to people and our environment. Mercury becomes toxic when it is converted to methylmercury, which can enter the blood and organs. Many household items contain mercury including: glass thermometers with silver liquid, button cell batteries, fluorescent tube light bulbs, compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs as well as round, non-digital thermostats.

Mercury-free alternatives are available - check the packaging. If not, be sure to dispose of these items properly.

20%

of the fish consumption restrictions in the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair and St. Clair River are caused by mercury.

## E Waste

E-Waste is any discarded electronic device (e.g., TVs, cell phones, computer hardware and accessories, cameras, etc.). It is now the fastest growing component of the solid waste stream because people are constantly upgrading their equipment. Electronics consist of many components (metals and plastics) that can be reused or recycled. They may also contain serious contaminants such as: lead, cadmium, beryllium or brominated flame retardants. Recycling diverts potentially hazardous materials from our landfills, and ultimately our environment.

Over  
**1 million** lbs  
of e-waste was diverted by Computer for Kids in 2010 alone!