

SEMCOG News Release

For immediate release

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SEMCOG encourages residents to properly dispose of hazardous waste

SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, and the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water remind Southeast Michigan residents that household hazardous waste can pollute our waterways if washed or dumped into storm drains or roadside ditches that lead directly to lakes and streams.

Household cleaners, pesticides, gasoline, antifreeze, used motor oil, and other hazardous products need to be labeled, stored, and disposed of properly. If not, these products can harm kids, pets, and the environment.

Some additional facts to consider — Americans generate 1.6 million tons of household waste per year; the average home generates as much as 100 pounds of household waste annually.

What can Southeast Michigan residents do?

- **Identify it.** Be aware of household products that can harm kids, pets, and the environment. The words "danger," "caution," "warning," or "toxic" indicate that you need to be careful in how you use and dispose of the product.
- **Less is better.** Reduce waste and save money by purchasing only the materials you need. When possible, choose less toxic alternatives. For example, try cleaning your windows with vinegar and water.
- **Store properly.** Keep unused products in their original containers with labels intact. Select cool, dry storage areas that are away from kids, pets, and wildlife.
- **Disposal is key.** Never dump motor oil, chemicals, and other toxic materials down storm drains, sinks, or on the ground. Contact your local community for disposal locations, guidelines, and dates.

Information about where residents can dispose of their household hazardous waste is available on the "Ours to Protect" Web site, accessible from www.semcog.org. Click on the logo on the home page, then on the photo; scroll down to "Information on Household Waste Disposal in Your County."

"Our Water. Our Future. Ours to Protect." is an ongoing campaign that focuses on the Seven Simple Steps to Clean Water — things Southeast Michigan citizens can do to help improve water quality. SEMCOG surveys have shown a willingness on the part of the public to take action to protect water resources.

"Now in its third year, this campaign emphasizes that individual actions have a direct impact on the rivers, lakes, and streams that we all enjoy," explains Paul Tait, Executive Director of SEMCOG. "The tips we're suggesting might require some adjustments in habits, but the campaign will educate the public and explain the reasons why. There are thousands of miles of rivers and thousands of lakes in Michigan. That's why we're all part of the solution."

Additional information and materials, such as posters and tip cards, can be found on the "Our Water. Our Future. Ours to Protect." Web site, accessible from SEMCOG's home page at www.semco.org. Seven, 30-second public service announcements (one for each tip) are available in both audio and video formats, and can be downloaded from the Web site.

The Southeast Michigan Partnership for Clean Water formed to engage the public in activities that protect our water resources through continued awareness, knowledge, and action. The partnership includes representatives from SEMCOG, various counties, communities, watershed councils, private sector, and water-quality professionals in Southeast Michigan.

SEMCOG is a regional planning partnership of local governmental units serving 4.9 million people in the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan striving to enhance the region's quality of life.

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