



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

Protecting Our Community

COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 32

Safe Use and Storage of Hazardous Substances

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service is committed to Protecting our Community and delivering advice to the public in relation to health, safety and wellbeing.

In domestic properties people store hazardous goods in garages, cupboards and sheds, unaware of the dangers if they are not handled or stored correctly. Hazardous materials, by nature, can harm children or adults. Proper use and storage reduces the risk of accidents involving hazardous materials.

If the substance is ignitable, corrosive, toxic or reactive, then it is hazardous. A large number of household chemicals and materials fit these categories, including paint, motor oil, antifreeze, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, cleaning agents, adhesives, arts and craft materials, aerosol cans and propane cylinders.

Safe use of hazardous substances

- Only use as much product as you need.
- Properly ventilate the area by opening windows or go outside.
- Wear proper protective clothing, when necessary, like gloves, long sleeves and a mask.
- Don't leave the product unattended- if you have to leave the area in the middle of a task, put the product away, take it with you or make it safe.
- Some household cleaners, eg, chlorine bleach and ammonia cannot be used together as it forms a toxic gas.
- Never smoke or have naked flames near hazardous substances.
- When filling lawnmowers with fuel ensure you are in fresh air and not in a garage or shed and away from ignition sources.
- After using the substance, wash any part of your body that came into direct contact with it as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Safe storage of hazardous substances

- Store hazardous substances by following the instructions on the label.
- Ensure the container used to store it is suitable and safe to contain it.
- Keep the contents locked up and out of reach of children.
- Never store hazardous substances near foodstuff or cooking utensils.
- If a substance leaks or is expired, you should dispose of it properly.
- Never pour substances down drains, follow the disposal advice on the label or take it to your local recycling centre who will dispose of it safely.

Useful contacts

HSENI Helpline 0800 032 0121

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/chemical-safety-home>

For further information phone NIFRS HQ 028 9266 4221 or visit www.nifrs.org



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