

SOAP Action Update

Household Hazardous Waste Cleanup Events



The Snohomish County Public Works Solid Waste Division routinely partners with local communities for the free collection and disposal of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW).

These types of wastes pose the same risks as hazardous wastes, but are generated in relatively small quantities by individual household. The wastes are typically flammable, corrosive, toxic, and/or reactive. The division is able to perform this service to local communities, in a large part, through Coordinated Prevention Grant funding provided from the Department of Ecology.

- In 2014, the division held collection events in Sultan, Stanwood, Mountlake Terrace, and Darrington. These events collected over 97,000 pounds of HHW. This includes over 31,000 pounds of oil-based paints.
- In 2015, the division held collection events in Sultan, Stanwood, and Darrington. These events collected over 24,000 pounds of HHW. This includes over 8,000 pounds of oil-based paints.

Many items collected at these events, can be recycled into new products or beneficially reused instead of being landfilled. Antifreeze and used motor oil, including the residual left in oil filters, is cleaned and reconditioned, and then resold. Batteries are separated into components and the metals reused in other applications. Solvents are sent for energy recovery.

The division also provides free year-round disposal of HHW at its transfer stations, rural drop box sites, and the Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Station located in Everett. In total, the division collected approximately 885 tons of HHW in 2014 and 906 tons of HHW in 2015. Of that, over 1,582 tons were able to be recycled or were beneficially reused.

environmental goals

Snohomish County is working to achieve the waste reduction, recycling and repurposing goal and objectives established in our internal Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP) for government operations. By partnering with our local communities and better tracking and recycling household wastes, we are taking action to achieve our SOAP Goals and Objectives, namely:

- **Goal 4:** Reduce, recycle and repurpose waste.
- **Objective 40:** Reduce waste from county facilities.
- By partnering with local communities we have additional opportunities to minimize waste processed at county facilities and shipped to a landfill for disposal.

This action also supports the Public Works Department sustainability goals to:

- Provide services to county residents and businesses and support a healthy environment.
- Maximize reduction, reuse and recycling of materials.
- Promote sustainable waste management practices.

environmental benefits

Free collection and disposal of HHW helps the environment by . . .

- Providing outlets for the proper collection and disposal of HHW.
- Minimizing risks to the environment and human health.
- Helping protect drinking water supplies.
- Helping prevent damage to waterways and natural resources.
- Avoiding potential cleanup costs from hazardous waste spills.

economic case

Offering convenient options for the proper disposal of hazardous wastes can help prevent costly cleanups. For example, the cost to clean up a single broken mercury thermometer can exceed \$1,000. Material improperly discarded in a landfill can lead to cleanup costs for the entire landfill, if material has to be mined out. In addition, collection events allow for the beneficial reuse and recycling of items such as oil, solvents, and batteries as opposed to direct disposal. Most times, beneficial reuse of a commodity, such as using flammable solvents as an alternative fuel, costs significantly less than the cost to directly dispose of the material properly.