

SAFE ALTERNATIVES TO COMMON HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Many everyday household products contain hazardous chemicals. When you dispose of these products in the storm drain, sink or garbage, the chemicals can end up in local water bodies or groundwater.

This list of alternatives is provided to help you make responsible decisions about the safe use and disposal of household products. By trying some or all of the alternatives, you will help Marion County move toward a goal of hazard-less waste.



These few supplies can replace many cleaners:

Baking Soda	Warm Water	Borax	Lemon Juice	Toothpaste
White Vinegar	Liquid Soap	Salt	Club Soda	Olive or Almond Oil
Flour	Baby Oil	Skim Milk	Margarine	Rubbing Alcohol

For this	Try this
All purpose cleaner	1 tsp liquid soap, 1 tsp borax, 1/4 cup vinegar, and 1 quart warm water. Or 1/4 cup white vinegar with 1 quart warm water.
Brass polish	Paste of equal parts vinegar, salt and flour. Be sure to rinse completely afterward to prevent corrosion.
Car battery corrosion removal	Baking soda and water
Chrome polish	Vinegar
Coffee cup stain removal	Rub with moist salt or baking soda.
Copper cleaner	Paste of equal parts vinegar, salt and flour. Be sure to rinse completely afterward to prevent corrosion.
Crayon mark remover	Rub mark with toothpaste and a damp cloth. Do not use on non-vinyl wallpaper.
Decal removal	Soak in hot water if practical; otherwise use white vinegar.
Dishwashing	Washing dishes by hand with a liquid soap or mild detergent is preferable to using strong electric dishwasher detergents. Look for detergents without phosphates or chlorine.
Disinfectants	Mix 1/2 cup borax with 1 gallon of boiling water. Or undiluted white vinegar.
Drain cleaner	Try plunger first. Then pour 1/2 cup baking soda down, then 1/2 cup vinegar; wait a few minutes, then follow with 2 quarts boiling water. Repeat if needed. If this fails, rent or buy a drain snake. Use solution weekly to prevent buildup.
Furniture polish	Olive oil or almond oil
Garbage disposal deodorizer	Used lemons or baking soda
Grout and stain cleaner	Paste made of baking soda and water, clean with toothbrush, spray with vinegar and water mix and after foaming is finished, rinse with water.
Handcleaner: paint/grease	Baby oil or margarine, then wash with soap and water.
Laundry detergent	1/2 cup white vinegar or baking soda or borax per load. Or laundry soap or a liquid detergent with low or no phosphate. A tablespoon of vinegar in the rinse increases the brightness.
Linoleum floor cleaner	1 cup white vinegar plus 2 gallons water
Linoleum floor polish	Polish with skim milk (it doesn't smell, milk evaporates!)
Mildew remover	A non-chlorinated scouring powder cleans mildew stains from grout. Scrub hard.
Moths (in clothes)	Thoroughly clean any used clothing or furniture before introducing into home. Wash woolens before storing; store in tight container with cedar chips, newspapers or lavender flowers (instead of mothballs). Vacuum rugs, behind and under furniture. Shake out woolens periodically.
Oven cleaner	As a preventive measure, cover the oven bottom with a sheet of aluminum foil. Clean up spills promptly. To clean, use baking soda, soap and water with a copper scrubber and lots of elbow grease. Or use a non-chlorinated scouring powder or non-caustic oven cleaner.
Paint (oil-based)	Latex paint, avoid aerosols.
Porcelain stain removal	Brush with baking soda
Refrigerator deodorizer	Open box of baking soda
Rug/carpet cleaner	Sprinkle baking soda, then vacuum. Or clean immediately with soda water or baking soda paste, then vacuum.
Scouring powder/abrasive cleaner	Baking soda or borax. Or rub area with 1/2 lemon dipped in borax, rinse and dry.
Silver cleaner	Rub gently with baking soda and damp sponge (large objects). For small objects place in pot of water on stove with small piece of aluminum foil; add 1 tsp baking soda and 1 tsp salt; boil 2-3 minutes. Or rub gently with toothpaste on a cottonball.
Stain removal	Depends on type of spill. Treat as quickly as possible and blot as much liquid as you can with paper towel or cloth (don't rub). For most stains, safest to try cold water first, then hot water with a little detergent.
Stainless steel cleaner	Baking soda
Toilet bowl cleaner	Baking soda or borax or soak with white vinegar
Tub and tile cleaner	Use vinegar (full-strength) on a sponge, then use baking soda as a scouring powder. Rinse well.
Vinyl floor cleaner	1 gallon warm water and 1/2 cup white vinegar or 1/4 cup borax
Wine stain removal	Water or rubbing alcohol
Window cleaner	1/2 cup vinegar in 1 quart warm water, wipe with crumpled newspaper.



Marion County Public Works - Environmental Services
 5155 Silverton Road N, Salem, Oregon 97305
 503-588-5169