SAFER ALTERNATIVES: Reducing The Risk

IN THE GARAGE

WINDOW AND GLASS CLEANER

A few tips on window washing: (1) never wash windows while the sun is shining on them because they dry too quickly and leave streaks; (2) when polishing windows use up and down strokes on one side of the window and side to side strokes on the other to tell which side requires extra polishing; and (3) to polish windows or mirrors to a sparkling shine, try a natural linen towel or other soft cloth, a clean, damp chamois cloth, a squeegee, or crumpled newspaper. One word of warning about newspaper: while newspaper does leave glass lint-free with a dirt resistant film, person with sensitivities to fumes from newsprint may wish to avoid the use of newspaper as a cleaning tool.

Vinegar. Wash windows or glass with a mixture of equal parts of white vinegar and warm water. Dry with a soft cloth. Leaves window and glass streakless. To remove those stubborn hardwater sprinkler spots and streaks, use undiluted vinegar.

All purpose paste. If the glass has a heavy buildup of dead bugs, combine 1/2 cup whiting (powdered chalk can be purchased at hardware and paint stores), 1/4 cup baking soda, 1 cup fuller’s earth (powdered clay or kitty litter) and water to make a paste solution. Apply the paste solution to the glass with a sponge and polish with a dry lint-free cloth.

Borax or Washing Soda. Two tablespoons of borax or washing soda mixed into 3 cups water makes a good window cleaner. Apply to surface and wipe dry.

Cornstarch and Vinegar. Mix 3 tablespoons cornstarch and 1/2 cup white vinegar into 1 gallon warm water. Apply to surface and wipe dry.

Lemon Juice. Mix 1 tablespoon lemon juice in 1 quart water. Apply to surface and wipe dry.

Baking Soda. To clean cut glass, sprinkle baking soda on a damp rag and clean glass. Rinse with clean water and polish with a soft cloth.

SCRATCHES, STAINS AND DISCOLORATION IN WINDOWS AND GLASS

Toothpaste. Rub a little toothpaste into the scratch. Polish with a soft cloth.

WINDSHIELD WIPER FLUID

Vinegar. When you have to leave your car outside overnight in the winter, mix 3 parts vinegar to 1 part water and coat the windows with this solution. This vinegar and water combination will keep windshields ice and frost-free.

Rubbing alcohol. Combine 1 quart rubbing alcohol, 2 tablespoons liquid detergent and 1 cup water. This formula will not freeze down to 35 degrees below zero.
SAFER ALTERNATIVES:

REDUCING THE RISK

One of the best means of avoiding exposure to household hazardous materials is to use safer alternatives whenever possible.

Included in this section are time-honored recipes and suggestions to help you make the switch toward safer household products. Ingredients followed by instructions will guide you through an array of easy-to-make, easy-to-use safer alternatives. Some ingredients recommended as alternatives are safer, but not nontoxic.

Making your own simple and effective products is fun and economical. We think you will be happily surprised with the results.

AEROSOLS

Aerosols contain an active ingredient and a liquid or gaseous propellant that is packed under at least 40 pound of pressure per square inch. These pressurized aerosol containers are explosive and may be flammable. Depending upon other ingredients, the aerosol sprays may be irritants, corrosives, poisons or contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Prevention. Use non-aerosol (pump-spray, roll-on or liquid) products.

ANTIFREEZE (ethylene glycol)

Propylene glycol-based. Use Propylene Glycol-based antifreeze as it is significantly less toxic than Ethylene Glycol-based. Ask for it when you buy antifreeze.

AUTOMOBILE CLEANING/Polishing

ALL PURPOSE CLEANER

Dish Soap. Use 2 tablespoons of a mild dish soap or 1/4 cup of soap flakes plus 2 gallons of warm water to wash the vehicle. Use the same solution and a brush to scrub the tires.

CHROME

Vinegar. To clean chrome, wipe with a soft cloth dipped in undiluted white or cider vinegar.

Baby Oil. Apply baby oil with a soft cloth and polish to remove stains from chrome trim on faucets, kitchen appliances, vehicles, etc.

Newspaper. To make chrome fixtures shine brightly, rub them with newspaper after they have been wet. Wear gloves to avoid getting newsprint on your hands and other surfaces.

Aluminum foil. Rub chrome with aluminum foil, shiny side out.

Baking Soda. To clean the chrome, apply a paste of baking soda and water to the chrome surface with a sponge; let the paste set for a few minutes, then rinse and wipe dry with a soft cloth.

RUST SPOTS

Steel wool. Use a soap filled steel wool pad to scrub the rust spots.

STAINLESS STEEL

Olive Oil. Rub stainless steel sinks with olive oil to remove streaks.

Vinegar. To clean and polish stainless steel, simply moisten a cloth with undiluted white or cider vinegar and wipe clean. Can also be used to remove heat stain on stainless steel cutlery.

Club Soda. Remove streaks or heat stains from stainless steel by rubbing with club soda.

TAR

Linseed Oil. Soak tar spots with raw linseed oil. Allow to stand until soft. Then wipe with a soft cloth which has been dampened with the linseed oil.

BATTERY CORROSION

Baking Soda. For battery terminals use a baking soda and water paste to clean away corrosion, after reconnecting the clamps to
the terminals, wipe them with petroleum jelly to prevent future corrosion.

DEGREASERS

Citrus/vegetable oil. Use citrus or vegetable oil based products with "Non-toxic", "Biodegradable" and "Non-flammable" on the label. These are effective, but much safer.

Kitty litter/cornmeal. For grease spots sprinkle kitty litter or cornmeal on the spot; after allowing it to sit for several hours, sweep up and dispose of in the garbage.

DE-ICERS

Salt alternative. Use sand, chicken grit or kitty litter (instead of salt) for traction on icy walkways or driveways.

HAND CLEANERS

Prevention. Use nitrile or other type gloves suited for the activity.

Oils. Massage hands with a few drops of baby oil, margarine or butter, or petroleum jelly; wipe dry; wash with soap and water

Non-toxic. Use a lanolin and glycerin-based, non-toxic hand cleaner

MOTOR OIL

Recycle. If you change your own oil, recycle it. If you have it changed at a service station use a station that has the waste oil recycled.

RE-REFINED OIL. Ask for RE-REFINED OIL. This will help improve the market for used oil, advance oil recycling efforts, help decrease the reliance on foreign suppliers and slow the rate of resource depletion.

OIL SPOTS ON THE GARAGE FLOOR

Mineral spirits. To remove oil drippings from concrete: Soak the area with mineral spirits for 30 minutes and then scrub with a stiff brush as you add more mineral spirits. Immediately after the scrubbing absorb the grease with oil towels or newspaper. Allow the concrete to dry, then wash the area with a solution of laundry detergent, 1 cup borax, and 1 gallon water.

PAINT

Prevention. Determine the amount you need for a job and purchase only that amount.

Alternative to oil-based paint. Use water-based paint instead of oil-based paint; latex paints are free of the flammable and toxic solvents found in oil-based paints.

Alternative to water-based paint. Use whitewash (a combination of hydrated lime, water and salt which lacks heavy metal pigments, alkyd resins and other chemicals common in water-based paint) for fences, barns, garages and outbuildings. Use a dust mask when mixing.

For further information call:

1-509-447-4513
Pend Oreille County, Solid Waste Division - Provides information on any solid or hazardous waste issue.

1-509-456-2926
Eastern Regional Office - Department of Ecology - Provides information about household hazardous waste regulations and notifies the Emergency Spill Response Team in the event of a hazardous waste spill.

1-800-RECYCLE
Department of Ecology - Provides information about recycling, alternatives to toxic products and disposing of household hazardous waste.

1-800-633-7585
Hazardous Substance Information Office, Department of Ecology - Provides information about the correct disposal of business moderate risk waste.

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