

By Commissioner Sue Gunzburger
Broward County Commission, District 6

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Every household in Broward County generates small amounts of hazardous chemicals. Even small amounts can cause environmental problems if they find their way into Broward County's drinking water. In addition, hazardous waste discarded in regular trash collections can also harm sanitation workers.

In an effort to reduce the amount of hazardous waste being disposed of improperly and harming our fragile environment, Broward County has established permanent Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers in the County. In addition, Broward County's Waste and Recycling Division conducts special monthly household hazardous waste and electronics recycling events throughout the County.

The next event in our area will be held on Sunday, November 18, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Anne Kolb Nature Center, Hollywood. The event is free. Proof of Broward County residency is required.

What to Bring: paints, solvents, pesticides, herbicides, lawn and pool chemicals, household cleaners, motor oil, auto fluids, mercury thermometers, fluorescent tubes and bulbs, fire extinguishers, propane tanks, tires, rechargeable batteries, cell phones, computers, printers, keyboards, fax machines and televisions.

Do Not Bring: business-generated waste, explosives, biohazardous waste, regular household batteries or small appliances such as microwaves and toasters.

For Safety: products should be kept in their original containers or clearly labeled if not in original container. All lids should be tightly sealed and leaking items placed in larger plastic containers.

After the materials are collected, specially-trained chemists and field technicians identify dangerous products, segregate incompatible chemicals and properly store or pack up the waste for transportation to a facility (outside of Broward), authorized to accept hazardous waste. Latex paint is recycled and repackaged for distribution, free of charge, to residents. In the spring of 2007, Broward County distributed more than 10,000 gallons of free paint to 427 residents. In August, a similar distribution occurred.

Discarding hazardous material protects the health and safety of all residents and future generations. Fluorescent light bulbs, for example, which are recommended over incandescent light bulbs by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and environmental groups, contain mercury, which can be dangerous, even in small quantities. The mercury can leach into the soil and water, poisoning fish and wildlife. These bulbs, while highly recommended, should never be put in the trash or garbage.

If the November 18 Household Hazardous Waste event in Hollywood is inconvenient, hazardous materials can be disposed of every week at the following permanent Broward County drop-off locations:

5601 W. Hallandale Beach Blvd., West Park (located between Miramar and Pembroke Park): Open every Friday and Saturday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

5490 Reese Rd., Davie: Open Saturdays only, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (accepts limited items—no electronics)

Should you have any questions, concerns or need assistance with recycling or any other matter, please feel free to contact me 954-357-7006 or you can e-mail me at sgunzburger@broward.org.

Until next month,

Sue Gunzburger
Broward County Commissioner