

The University of Regina is committed to keeping our campuses safe for students, faculty and staff by ensuring the safe disposal of aged and disused (“legacy”) chemicals. For information regarding proper procedures for the safe disposal of hazardous waste on our campuses, please visit the Health and Safety website – Hazardous Materials and Equipment Safety – Hazardous Waste Disposal, or click [here](#).

It is JUST as important to be safe in our homes and look for hazardous materials and/or legacy chemicals.....

Do you have materials in your home that have passed their shelf life?

Do you have bottles in your home that are degrading and posing an additional hazard?

Do you have chemicals stored together in your home that are non-compatible? (e.g. bleach and toilet bowl cleaner)



LET’S TAKE A LOOK!

Bleach

Bleach (sodium hypochlorite) is a common household disinfectant, but did you know that it degrades over time and becomes less effective? Bleach starts to degrade after six months and is generally considered expired after one year. Even with proper storage (keeping it in the original container, tightly closed, away from sunlight) bleach will become 20% less effective as each year goes by. Keep this mind when using bleach to disinfect surfaces, as it may not be as effective as you think!



For more information on the shelf life of bleach, click [here](#).

Medications



Have you checked your medicine cabinet lately? Consider going through your medications and disposing of any that are no longer used and/or expired as part of your regular spring cleaning. Keeping unused or leftover medications can increase the likelihood that they are accidentally ingested by kids or pets.

As with all hazardous products, the guiding principle should be to dispose of anything that is not actively needed. ***You can return unused/expired medications to any pharmacy.***

Mercury

Be mindful of any products in your home that may contain mercury; **it is extremely dangerous**. Do you have an old mercury thermometer? It may work just fine but the risk of keeping it is enough to justify purchasing a new one.

Some old appliances may have mercury switches in them, like thermostats, pilot light sensors, space heaters, etc. [Click here](#) for a list of other items that may contain mercury.



Degraded Containers

If a chemical itself is not expired or degraded, the **container** holding it might be showing signs of wear. Many leaks and spills have occurred as a result of old containers cracking or rusting through. Go through your chemicals in your garage, cleaning supplies, and paint to check for signs of container degradation: rust, cracked lids, bulging or sunken-in containers, discoloured plastic.

Batteries

Batteries contain hazardous materials that are at a greater risk of leaking as the battery ages or is depleted. **Nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd)** rechargeable batteries are becoming less available; however, you may still have devices around your home with this type of battery. **Cadmium** is very toxic and extremely harmful to the environment (which is why they have been replaced by **NiMH** batteries) and must be disposed of properly. Similarly, vehicle batteries (typically lead-acid) are extremely corrosive when ruptured.

Avoid accumulating depleted batteries and mixing different battery types, as this increases the risk of leaking or rupture. With any hazardous material, it is best to not keep or store batteries that you do not need. It is important to recycle old batteries, however, do NOT dispose of any battery in the trash!! If you discover a battery that is leaking or ruptured, do **not** touch the residue!

For your convenience, green recycling bins are located around campus for safe disposal of batteries.



Disposing of Household Hazardous Materials in Regina



Hazardous materials are not safe to dispose of in regular garbage bins or down the drain.

The City of Regina Household Hazardous Materials Depot offers free disposal of household hazardous materials. For location, hours of operation, materials that **are** and **are not** accepted at the Depot click on the picture.