

Keeping Toxics Out of the Landfill

CVSWMD Collections Encourage Proper Disposal of Hazardous Waste

Note: The Hazardous Waste Collection data is reported on a calendar year, rather than fiscal year, basis. The information and data reported here refer to the 2008 collection season, which ran from April through September 2008.

Resident and business use of CVSWMD Hazardous Waste Collections both rose to new highs during calendar year 2008, with 684 households and 35 businesses participating in the six collections. In fact, the Montpelier collection on September 27 was the District's largest hazardous waste collection event ever, with a record 287 households participating.

As you might expect, the increased number of participants brought an increased quantity of materials to the collections. The only category of waste that dropped from 2007 figures was latex paint, although all paint (latex and oil-based paint and resins) accounts for the majority of the waste brought to these collections—63% in 2008.

Even with the increased participation rates, the quantity of fluorescent bulbs collected at the 2008 events is surprising. The 2007 data showed a significant reduction in the quantity of bulbs brought to the collections and we surmised that the drop was a direct result of the increased access to year-round free bulb recycling through area hardware and lighting stores. The 2008 data seems to refute this, with nearly 1,000 *more* pounds (an additional 6,556 ft.) of bulbs brought to the collections. While we can't say why this increase occurred, District staff will work to continue to increase public awareness of the free fluorescent bulb recycling options available to households in the coming year.

Manufacturer responsibility for the proper management and disposal of the toxic products they produce continues to gain support in the U.S. The increasing popularity of fluorescent bulb and electronics recycling programs through manufacturer or distributor-funded collections are an example of this shift, and every additional product added to take-back efforts reduces the disposal costs for both the customer and solid waste districts. While the CVSWMD

Calendar Year 2008 Facts & Figures

- CVSWMD held **6 Hazardous Waste Collections**: one each in Barre Town, Tunbridge, Hardwick, and Montpelier, and two in Bradford.
- **684 households** and **35 businesses** took part.
- **121 more households** and **13 more businesses** participated this year over last year.

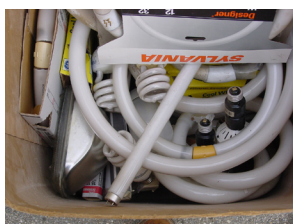
Materials collected:

- 15.8 tons of **mixed paint** (*up from 13.74 tons in 2007*)
- 6.8 tons of **latex paint** collected and sent for recycling (*down from 7.26 tons in 2007*)
 - 12.4 tons of **general hazardous waste** (*down from 13.22 tons in 2007*)
 - 87 lbs. of **mercury** (*up from 79 lbs. in 2007*)
- 10,161 ft. of **fluorescent bulbs** (*up from 3,605 ft. in 2007*)
- 1.84 tons of **rechargeable batteries** collected at District recycling depots and sent for recycling (*up from 521 lbs. in 2007*)

charges some fees for hazardous waste disposal (i.e. \$10 per car at events; separate fees for electronic equipment at depots), these fees do not cover all of the costs of proper disposal and/or recycling of hazardous products, and District funds from per capita fees, grants, and the surcharge tax on garbage are needed to make up the difference.

To help initiate change on a statewide level, the District is committed to helping to develop the statewide **Vermont Product Stewardship Council**. Why is this effort important? Local governments and individuals pay the bulk of the cost for waste disposal, yet they have little direct input into the design, production practices, packaging, or distribution, or the toxicity of the materials used. Product stewardship calls on all those involved in the product life cycle—the designers, manufacturers, retailers, users, and waste managers—to share the responsibility and costs for reducing the adverse environmental impacts of products. Product stewardship also holds producers liable for the costs of responsible product management at “end of life.”

Product stewardship efforts have been shown to drive improvements in product design that promote environmental sustainability—which is why it's a critical component of zero waste systems. The District is committed to helping to create a statewide council. See the Product Stewardship Institute (www.productstewardship.us) for more information.



Fluorescent bulbs and paint are common products brought to hazardous waste collections.