

# **HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE AND YOUR WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

Your wastewater treatment system is designed to remove organic matter, pathogens, and nutrients normally found in household sewage. Non-degradable items such as plastic, rags, towels or trash should never be discharged to any septic system, because these materials clog the system and reduce its effectiveness.

Septic systems are not designed to remove volatile organic compounds (VOC' s) or other types of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW). VOC' s can result in explosive conditions in the sewage collection system. VOC' s kill the bacteria that is provided to treat the wastewater to the levels safe enough to be discharged back to the environment. If the bacteria are not healthy, then the water may not be able to be treated adequately enough.

Further, these pollutants can pass through the system and can contaminate surface and groundwater. This is why items like solvents, paints, oils, antifreeze, or household hazardous waste should never be dumped into the system.

## ***WHAT IS HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE?***

Household Hazardous Waste, or HHW, is waste material that can be harmful to human health or the environmental if it is used, stored or disposed of improperly. These wastes can be the leftovers from common products that are found in most homes and garages. When the product is no longer usable or wanted, it becomes household hazardous waste.

To protect our environment, do not dispose of household hazardous products in the trash, down the sewer, or on the ground. Improper disposal of HHW is not only illegal; it can also contaminate our drinking water supplies and pollute our lakes and streams.

## ***WHAT ARE VOC'S?***

Volatile organic compounds (VOC' s) are petroleum based chemicals such as gasoline, kerosene, paint, acetone, and diesel fuel. Materials that include VOC' s specify them on canisters and labels. They must be disposed of in accordance with State regulations and should never be placed in the wastewater system.

## ***WHERE CAN YOU DISPOSE OF VOC'S AND OTHER WASTES?***

Homeowners should follow state and local ordinances for disposal of these materials. Please bring these items to the Scott County HHW Collection Facility so they may be reused, recycled, reprocessed, or properly disposed of. The facility location is identified at the red star on the map below:

