

MassDEP Household Hazardous Products Action Plan

DRAFT (May 29, 2025)

GOAL

The goal of this plan is to advance the proper management of unwanted or leftover Household Hazardous Products (HHPs) from households and small businesses, while reducing/eliminating the amount of HHPs used in favor of less toxic products. HHP collection efforts should address the following:

- Protect public health and the environment from mismanagement of HHPs,
- Increase public awareness about the proper disposal/recycling of leftover/unwanted products, HHP collection opportunities, and potential dangers of storing hazardous waste beyond its shelf life,
- Address public demand for increased collection of wastes considered to be dangerous,
- Increase management options in underserved and Environmental Justice communities,
- Ensure adequate infrastructure to manage HHPs,
- Reduce costs associated with the management of HHPs, and
- Increase participation rates to effectively capture more HHPs for proper disposal.
- Educate and promote reduction in the use of HHPs.

Although this plan's intended purpose is to address household hazardous products on a statewide basis, particular attention will be given to those communities which are underserved due to a lack of recycling and disposal options. These communities will be prioritized for expanded access to these services and education.

BACKGROUND

MassDEP's Solid Waste Master Plan prioritizes reducing toxicity in solid waste by expanding access to HHP collections, as well as implementing manufacturer and/or extended producer responsibility (EPR) efforts for high profile materials. As outlined in the *1996 Massachusetts Draft Plan for Managing Hazardous Materials from Households and Small Businesses*, there are two broad HHP categories: high-volume products and low-volume products. The high-volume, typically less toxic, product category would be managed through ongoing local collection programs provided by both municipal and private entities. Low hazard/High volume waste categories include, but are not limited to:

- Automotive waste – oil, filters, anti-freeze, batteries
- Universal waste, including TVs, computers, and other electronics
- Propane tanks
- Lithium-Ion/nickel cadmium batteries
- Latex and oil-based paints
- Mercury containing products such as lamps, thermostats, and thermometers

The low-volume products, typically with higher toxicity, would be collected at public or private events and permanent collection centers. This combination of collection methods will increase residential and small business access to services in the most cost-effective manner. High hazard/Low-volume HHP categories include but are not limited to:

- Solvents/Adhesives
- Pesticides/Fertilizers/Weed Killers/ Poisons
- Toxic cleaners
- Gasoline
- Chemicals (photo, chemistry, pool, etc.)
- Flammable liquids
- Art/hobby supplies

Some universal and solid waste materials may be considered hazardous (once collected) due to other hazardous attributes (e.g., potentially flammable/combustible) or damage to the item (e.g., smashed CRT/television); whereas other wastes may not actually be hazardous but are often managed together with other hazardous wastes or hazardous materials (e.g., latex paint).

EVALUATION

Through MassDEP's annual Solid Waste and Recycling Surveys, which are submitted by municipalities as a condition of the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP), the Department obtains information on residential access to municipal services for the proper management of HHPs. Table 1 (page 9) shows the percentage of households and population with access to permanent collection opportunities for many of the high volume HHPs. Table 2 shows the percentage of households (82%) and population (78%) with access to at least one HHP collection event per year. This includes those populations with access to permanent centers. In addition to these municipal and regional government collection programs, there are many collection locations available through private entities. These include drop-off locations for lithium and other household batteries, mercury containing products, used motor oil and other automotive wastes, and electronics. Although not a complete list of these private collection efforts, MassDEP works with municipalities and service providers to list their collection locations in our Beyond the Bin webpage.

MassDEP will continue working with both internal and external stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of HHP management in the state, including analyzing data for:

- Annual municipal solid waste and recycling survey results,
- Municipal one-day events and permanent collection centers data,
- Evaluating waste characterization and reported state contract data
- Visits to MassDEP webpages to evaluate effectiveness of outreach materials,
- Identification of privately operated collection locations; and
- Technical assistance calls and emails.

HHP ACTION PLAN STRUCTURE

This Action Plan is divided into the following four sections:

Expansion of Low Volume/High Toxicity Collection

MassDEP will continue to provide funding for the establishment of permanent collection centers (both regional and municipal) through SMRP – Municipal Application.¹ MassDEP's Recycling Dividends Program (RDP) encourages HHP collection activities by awarding points/funding which can be used to hold one-day collection events, reciprocal collection events, and/or partner with or operate a permanent collection center. MassDEP Municipal Assistance Coordinators (MACs) will help communities establish and contract for these services. MassDEP regional staff will assist communities in permitting permanent regional centers and one-day collection events. MassDEP also will work with interested private entities to establish collection centers for these materials.

Expansion of High Volume/Low Toxicity Collection

Currently, collection programs for high-volume product categories focus on cost effective collection of these products that are generated frequently and in relatively high volume. MassDEP will continue to support these programs to increase the frequency of collection opportunities for these commonly generated products beyond what is available through one-day collection events that accept all hazardous materials. This approach enables higher levels of participation and capture of more materials. Collecting these materials separately, on a more frequent and ongoing basis, can reduce the volume of these materials collected at one-day events, which will make those programs more cost-effective.

Education/Outreach/Training

Educating the residents and businesses on where to find information on the public and private opportunities to properly manage HHPs and promote the use of low or non-toxic alternatives. Work with municipalities to share information and outreach materials, provide training on how to establish local collection programs, and encourage more participation by residents and businesses.

Encourage Purchase of Low/Non-Toxic Alternatives

Promoting alternative environmentally preferred products (EPPs) to those that are higher toxicity can reduce household hazardous waste generation and disposal. This would include promotion to residents and businesses about alternatives and encourage municipalities to pilot and incorporate alternatives into their operations.

In the tables below, in the Timeframe Column, three different timeframes are listed:

- Ongoing
- Shorter term – to be implemented within 1-2 years
- Longer term – to be implemented within 3-5 years

¹ SMRP also includes an option for a single municipality to develop a permanent collection site.

Expansion of Low Volume/High Toxicity Collection			
Goal	Elements	Timeframe	Notes
Expand Access to Permanent Collection Facilities	Continue to provide grant funding to municipalities/regional groups to establish permanent collection centers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleven permanent centers are operational in MA. • Planning for new permanent center to be built in Lawrence. • Planning for SSRC's (South Shore Recycling Cooperative) new regional center is in progress.
	Work with hazardous waste companies to expand private permanent collection opportunities.	Shorter Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline permitting process at 310 CMR 30.393 • Provide grants and loan funding to support infrastructure development
	Review annual data for effectiveness and identify gaps in coverage and accessibility	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess access, convenience, effectiveness of collections areas with particular emphasis for EJ communities.
Encourage/expand one-day event reciprocal agreements	Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) assistance with support and coordination of regional events.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase frequency and open operation hours of scheduled events. • Expand accessibility for non-driving residents in urban areas.
	MassDEP to provide technical assistance on event permits, reciprocal agreements, and streamline the approval processes.	Shorter Term	
	Include small business access, hauler	Shorter Term	

Expansion of High Volume/Low Toxicity Collection			
Goal	Elements	Timeframe	Notes
Promote expanding EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) initiatives and expand waste categories	Support paint EPR in Massachusetts	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage through DEP's Commissioner's office on the Extended Producer Responsibility Commission. Assess effectiveness of paint EPR in other states.
	Support lithium battery EPR in Massachusetts	Shorter Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage through DEP's Commissioner's office on the Extended Producer Responsibility Commission. Assess effectiveness of lithium battery EPR in other states.
	Assess other EPR programs that address HHPs	Longer Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine applicability in Massachusetts. Do research and make recommendations to EPR for additional HHPs, such as Vermont's law.
Use of statewide government HHP OSD (Operational Services Division) contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicize through MACs, MMA, MassDEP website availability of statewide government contract (Current contract FAC110 expiring on 6/25; new contract WMR001 on July 1, 2025). Publicize vendor list on WMR001. 	Shorter Term	<p>Statewide contract WMR001 to provide resources and services for the collection of HHP, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent drop-off facility option in new contract. MassDEP with OSD to provide training and information on statewide contract for local government staff Collection services for hazardous waste and one-day collection events for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronics Motor oil, car batteries, filters, and antifreeze Universal Waste (e.g., mercury and batteries) Sharps and pharmaceutical waste Lithium-ion batteries, tanks, and cylinders
Pursue expansion of collection categories of MWC (Municipal Waste Combustor) MSPs (Material Separation Plans)	MWC MSPs have funded Universal Waste Sheds that collect mercury-added products (categories in the next planning cycle may include lithium-ion battery collection/propane tanks/etc).	Shorter Term	
MassDEP Grant Initiatives	SMRP Universal Waste Shed Grant – Identify additional capital investment	Ongoing	Continue providing grants to eligible municipalities for Universal Waste Sheds, including collection of mercury-added products, batteries, etc.

	needs for other materials and infrastructure (e.g., waste oil tanks).		
	Technical Assistance grants for HHP center planning (also develop guidance for HHP center planning) and staff training.	Shorter Term	
Consider/expand support for infrastructure/equipment to accept and manage these materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grants • Recycling & Reuse Business Development Grants 	Ongoing	E.g., RBDG to Recolor to expand operations

Education/Outreach/Training			
Goal	Elements	Timeframe	Notes
Provide Training to Municipal Officials	MassDEP to provide technical assistance on event permits, reciprocal agreements, and streamline approval processes.	Shorter term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidance on to create and maintain HHP permanent collection MassDEP can provide training to be recorded or replicated by municipalities.
	In-person meetings/conferences to encourage networking (e.g., Barnstable County).	Longer term	
Update MassDEP websites	Assess current information and expand informative resources for residents and municipalities	Shorter term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update resources User friendly Provide assistive services and translation of as many resources as possible Expand safety management practices Align with other state and federal departments/agencies
Assist the general public on disposal and proper management opportunities	Direct assistance through MassDEP email portal for resident questions.	Shorter term	
	MWCs, MACs and other organizations can provide training to their residents as to reduce improper disposal and answer questions from the general public.	Shorter term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including guidance documents, presentations, MassDEP HHP email address. Include QR codes to reference website on guidance documents. Appropriate point-of-contact at MassDEP to address questions/concerns. Diversify educational opportunities through social media, video and audio. Reach out to small businesses, trade associations, unions, business groups, vocational schools, MMA. Partner with local health departments to include information on their websites

	Promote Voluntary Private Collection Efforts	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRC (Thermostat Recycling Corporation) • Call2Recycle • Beyond the Bin • Consumer Technology Association • Retailers
	Expand knowledge of proper latex paint disposal and recycling/encourage paint recycling programs.	Shorter term	
Encourage disaster preparedness	Encourage municipalities to incorporate HHP management options into disaster management plans.	Shorter term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with MEMA and state disaster debris management contractor to provide workshops.

Encourage Purchase of Low/Non-Toxic Alternatives			
Goal	Elements	Timeframe	Notes
Expand adoption of EPPs within state and municipalities	Work with OSD to make EPPs more readily accessible/available.	Ongoing	E.g., purchase reclaimed paint for schools.
	Consider modifying RDP points to increase incentives	Longer term	
	Consider grants to pilot and test recycled content products (e.g., recycled paint)	Longer term	
	Continue to require EPP purchasing policies with annual SMRP application requirements	Ongoing	
Encourage consumers to switch to less hazardous alternative products	Encourage retailers to provide HHP alternatives and encourage consumer use/switch to viable alternatives.	Longer term	

Table 1: Local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Coverage

Waste Category	Households Served*	% Households Served	Population Served **	% Population Served
Waste/Used Engine Oil	1,035,417	41%	2,643,675	38%
Used Oil Filters	734,731	29%	1,849,101	26%
Auto Batteries	1,144,573	45%	2,869,733	41%
Auto Tires	993,317	39%	2,495,693	36%
Anti-freeze	844,422	33%	2,128,953	30%
Household Batteries	1,377,385	55%	3,460,279	50%
Lithium Batteries	1,304,336	52%	3,267,090	47%
TVs and Computers	1,596,370	63%	3,930,704	56%
Other Electronics	1,216,975	48%	3,069,565	44%
Propane Tanks (1 lbs)	1,095,390	43%	2,796,907	40%
Propane Tanks (20 lbs)	1,089,323	43%	2,789,257	40%
Latex Paint	658,523	26%	1,681,897	24%
Oil Based Paint	651,083	26%	1,643,816	24%
Fluorescent Lamps/CFLs	1,365,367	54%	3,455,788	49%
Thermostats	1,420,335	56%	3,600,690	52%
Thermometers	1,403,650	56%	3,560,145	51%
Other Hg products	1,365,283	54%	3,470,876	50%
Sharps	1,431,986	57%	3,585,764	51%
Fire Extinguishers	923,896	37%	2,344,451	34%

* Number of Households in MA in 2024: 2,521,034 Households

** Population in MA in 2020: 6,984,205 People

Table 2

Collection Type	# of Municipalities	Households Served	% Households Served	Population Served	% of Population Served
One-day events/Regional Centers	183	2,191,086	82%	5,423,321	78%