

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program

Staff Analysis – Reducing Program Costs

Background

The State of Ohio’s Solid Waste Management Plan requires all solid waste management districts to include strategies in their solid waste management plan for the proper management of hazardous waste generated by households. These strategies could include programs ranging from promotion of permanent outlets available for household hazardous waste, such as quick change oil shops for motor oil, to conducting collection events.

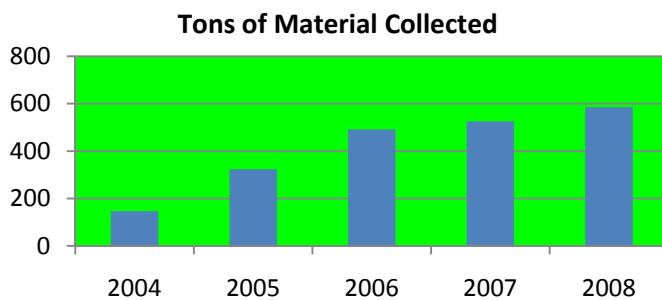
The District’s first household hazardous waste (HHW) collection event was conducted in 1995. From 1995 – 1997, the District held between four and five one-day HHW events each year. The high costs of the HHW collection events prompted the District to re-evaluate the scope of the HHW collection program. From 1998-1999, the District did not conduct HHW collection events. Instead, the District promoted the availability of permanent outlets for HHW, such as batteries and used oil.

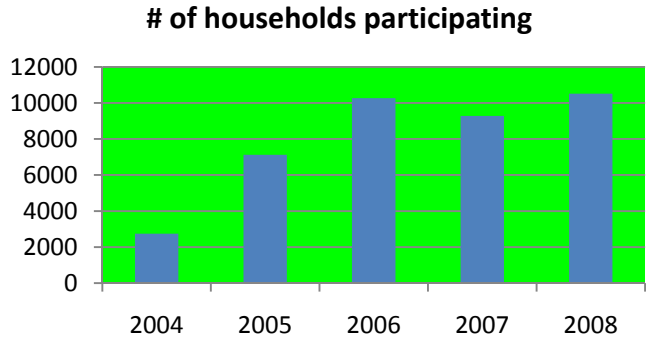
The need for the management of materials such as pesticides, solvents, and adhesives persisted and the District recommended that the HHW collection events be reinstated and conducted every three years. One-day collection events were held in 2000 and 2003. Conducting HHW events every three years filled a needed service; however, the District continued to receive requests for a more permanent outlet for HHW.

In 2004, the District developed a semi-permanent drop-off program for household hazardous waste. The goal of this program is to provide residents with a convenient outlet for hazardous products disposal. Hamilton County residents can drop-off hazardous waste at two locations: 4650 Spring Grove Avenue and 10163 Cincinnati-Dayton Road. The program continues to operate.

Results of HHW Program

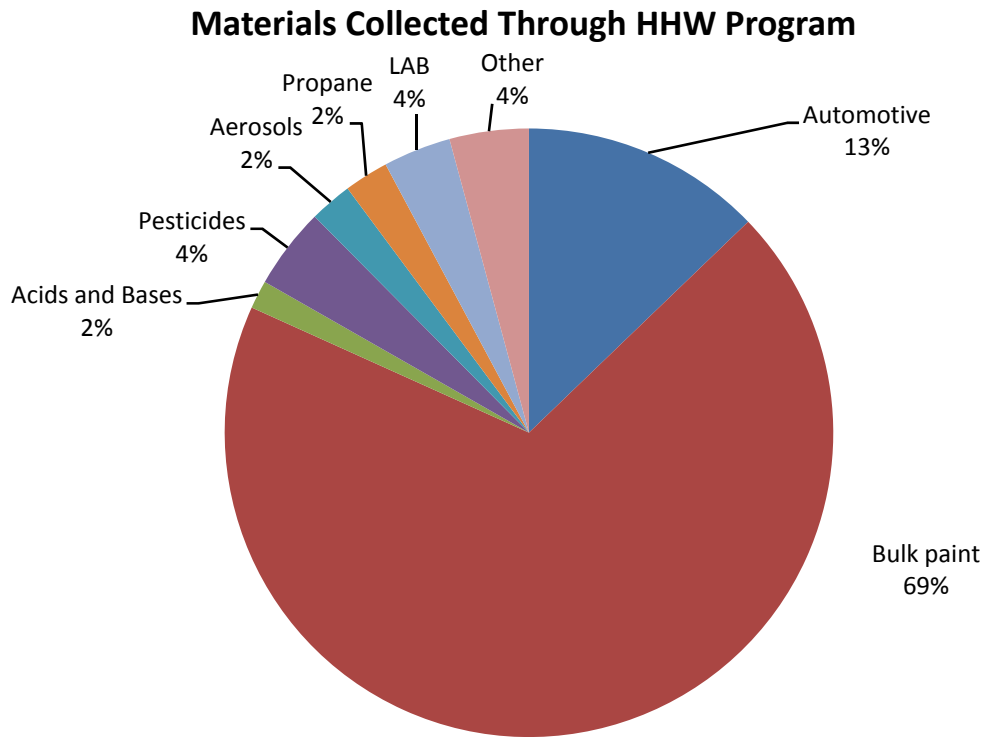
Since 2004, the District collected 2,071 tons of material from almost 40,000 households. The tables below provide an historic look at the results of the HHW program.





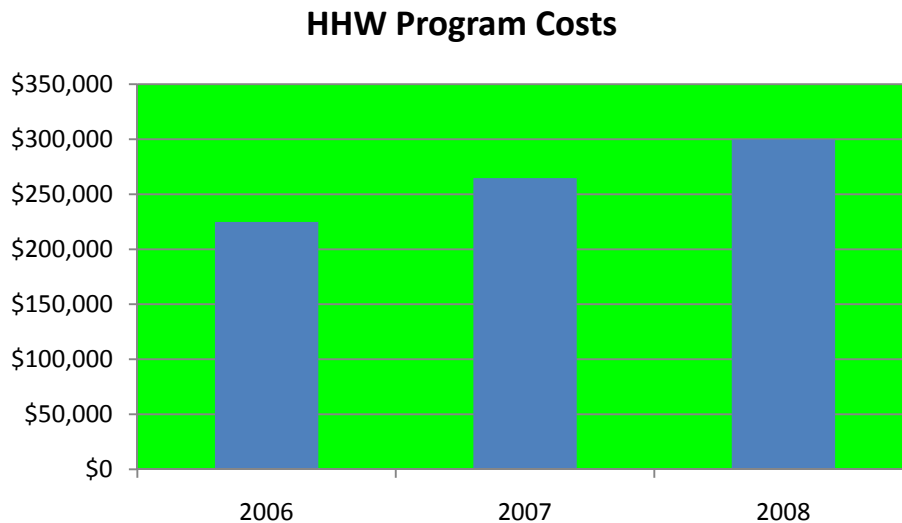
Types of Materials Collected

The goal of any household hazardous waste collection program is to provide outlets for those products that are truly hazardous, including, but not limited to: pesticides, fertilizers, oil-based paint, solvents, and automotive fuels. In addition to these materials, the District also accepts latex paint. The chart below outlines the proportions of materials received by weight during the 2008 HHW collection program.



Household Hazardous Waste Program Costs

The household hazardous waste program is one of the District's most expensive programs to operate. In 2008, the household hazardous waste program cost \$299,000.00. Historical costs of the program are listed below:



When the District initially solicited bids for the operation of the HHW program, vendors were asked to provide pricing on a per pound or per household basis. To date, the District has opted for a per household rate. The District is currently charged a flat rate of \$28.50 for each household that participates in the program. That amount will increase to \$30/household if the District chooses to accept the option year in 2010.

Recommendation to Reduce HHW Program Costs

Throughout its history, the District has struggled to manage or contain the costs of the HHW program. For example, the District eliminated HHW collection events from 1998-1999 in an effort to reduce costs.

Due to economic conditions, the District is anticipating a 20 percent revenue reduction for 2009. To plan for the revenue reduction, staff is examining ways to adjust programming in all areas. Given the high costs associated with the HHW program, this is the first program where staff is recommending changes. The District is not proposing to eliminate the program; however, changes must be made to the program to make it more cost-effective and sustainable.

Having analyzed the HHW program over the past year, Staff is recommending that latex paint be eliminated from the program in 2010 for the following reasons:

1. Latex paint is not considered a hazardous waste. The paint can be dried out and disposed in the trash.
2. The District could see significant savings estimated at \$80,000/year. To achieve these savings, the District would amend its contract to be charged a per pound rate versus a flat rate per household.
3. Throughout Ohio and the United States, cities and counties are eliminating latex paint from their hazardous waste collection programs.
4. Eliminating latex paint does not contradict the District's Solid Waste Management Plan Update. As stated in the Plan, "If during the planning period, either the cost or performance of the permanent HHW program becomes unacceptable to the District, the District will evaluate replacing it with an alternative..."

Any changes to the HHW program will be implemented in 2010. By planning ahead, the District can allow several months to educate the users of the HHW program about the change in programming.

Factors to Determine Eliminating Latex Paint

| Pros | Cons |
|---|--|
| Potential cost savings of \$80,000 annually. | Hamilton County residents will be upset and confused with the change. Could be viewed as reduction in service. |
| Latex paint is not considered hazardous. | Although latex paint can be dried out and thrown away, it is perceived as inconvenient. |
| If revenues continue to decline past 2009, it is hoped that eliminating latex paint will allow the District to continue an HHW program beyond 2010. | |
| Elimination of latex paint does not contradict the District's Plan Update. | |

Summary

Since 1995, the District has operated household hazardous waste programming. The programming has ranged from several one-day collection events/year to no events to a semi-permanent collection program. The evolution of the HHW program resulted from trying to contain the costs of the program while maintaining a convenient outlet for residents to dispose of their hazardous waste.

Household hazardous waste collection programs provide multiple benefits including:

- Reducing injuries to waste haulers
- Reducing illegal dumping of materials
- Encouraging residents to not pour hazardous products down the drain

Given the potential of a 20 percent reduction in revenue, the District is recommending the elimination of latex paint from the HHW collection program. For the past several years, many solid waste districts in Ohio have eliminated latex paint because it is not considered hazardous. In addition, the elimination of latex paint is anticipated to reap a significant cost savings.

The District cannot predict when revenues will return to past levels, however, planning ahead now will allow the District to continue a household hazardous waste collection program for those products that are considered hazardous through, at a minimum, 2010.