

Understanding labels on chemicals

How do I know if I am buying or using products that may be hazardous? What do all of the warning labels really mean?

Service Overview

The Boulder County Hazardous Materials Management Facility (HMMF) collects household hazardous waste free of charge for Boulder County, City and County of Broomfield, and Town of Erie residents. Businesses are charged a small fee to dispose of their hazardous materials properly.

When purchasing or using a product, always be sure to read the label. If the product contains hazardous substances, then it must meet certain labeling requirements under federal law. When it comes to household hazardous materials, the consumer should keep an eye out for “**signal words**”, a key word listed on the label in large print that indicates the product’s toxicity to humans.

Signal Words

IRRITANT/CAUTION/WARNING: This indicates that there is little to moderate likelihood of acute illness if swallowed, inhaled or exposed to the skin. Little to moderate skin or eye irritation. Look for the “X” or the “!” symbols.



DANGER/POISON: The use of either of these signal words indicate that the product is very toxic with a strong likelihood of acute illness if swallowed, inhaled, or exposed to the skin. Severe skin or eye irritation. All safety precautions and guidelines must be followed. Look for the skull and crossbones symbol.



This information does not apply uniformly to all dangerous household products. Different labeling requirements can apply to different chemicals. However, the **signal words** above are a very useful starting point for understanding how to protect yourself and your family from harm.



For proper disposal of hazardous materials, visit us at:

Hazardous Materials Management Facility

1901c 63rd Street, Boulder

Open: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Closed: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday & county holidays

720.564.2251, www.bouldercountyrecycles.org