

Handling HHW [and more!] During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Recently, the Van Buren Conservation District made the difficult decision to cancel our June 20 Recycle Roundup event to help protect the community from further transmission of COVID-19. The event included a scrap tire collection, household hazardous waste disposal, paper shredding, and paint disposal and recycling. We still plan to hold our September 12 Recycle Roundup event in South Haven. We urge you to hang on to the items you were going to bring to the June Recycle Roundup event and plan to bring them to us in September or next year in June. Don't let these items end up in our drains, sewers, roadway, ditches, or elsewhere. Below are some tips to remember while storing these items.

If you have scrap passenger tires or large tires you're hoping to recycle this year, please contact the Conservation District so we can put you on our sign-up list. This will help us know how many tires are out there and how we can get in touch with you to direct you to the collection at which we can collect your tires.

If you have household hazardous waste, keep that stored as well. Don't dump anything down the drain or place it in the trash.

- Store all items out of reach of pets and children
- Place items where they will stay dry and relatively cool
- Tape the ends of batteries and keep them together
- Ensure lightbulbs are safe from rolling around or off of shelves
- Store acids and bases away from each other
- Refrain from transferring products from their original container into another one
- Use a bag, box, or plastic bucket you don't need to contain leaking or ripped original containers

If you have paper that must be shredded before September, you can stop by one of the UPS Stores (in Paw Paw and South Haven) to have paper shredded. Credit unions occasionally offer paper shredding events, so contact your local credit union to see if they plan to do one even in the midst of the pandemic. If you take advantage of either of these options, be sure to practice safe social distancing, proper handwashing, and mask wearing to help protect those with whom you come in contact.

If you're able to, keep your latex paint for the September Recycle Roundup event or next year's events; it can be made into new paint by doing so! If you can't hang onto them, latex paint cans can be opened and set out to dry in the sun. Once they are dry, you can dispose of the cans with your trash. Oil-based paints and stains cannot be placed in your trash, nor can they be dried out fully. Store those safely until the next collection or use on them on a new project!

We thank you for doing your part to help keep our community safe and moving into the future! As always, conservation is a large part of that, so we encourage you to remain hopeful, be present in each moment, and be responsible for that which you can be responsible.