WHAT TO DO

- Read the product label carefully, follow instructions and use the recommended dosage.
- Look for words such as ‘Danger’, ‘Warning’ and ‘Caution’.
- Wear appropriate protective personal equipment such as gloves and safety goggles when handling hazardous products.
- Keep all household chemicals out of reach of children.
- Store flammable materials away from heat and flames. Keep in a cool and dry place.
- Wash hands with soap and water after handling any household chemical.
- If chemicals come into contact with your skin or eyes, flush immediately with copious amounts of water or solvent/solution recommended by manufacturer for at least 15-20 minutes. Get medical attention if irritation develops and persists.
- Keep household chemicals in their original container.
- Handle any chemical products in a well-ventilated area.
- Follow the instructions on the label of the household product for proper disposal and recycling.
- Avoid exposure to hazardous chemicals during pregnancy.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not mix household chemicals such as cleaning products.
- Do not use products other than for their intended purpose.
- Do not smoke when handling household chemicals.
- Do not spray pesticides in your yard on a windy day.
- Do not store household chemicals with food products, drinks, medicine and pet feeds.
- Do not buy more household chemicals than needed.
- Do not store incompatible products together, e.g. flammables should never be stored with corrosives.
- Do not keep paints, furniture polish and varnish removers near heat and flames.
- Do not store a household chemical in a container that was not made for it, e.g. a food container.
- Do not fill a container of storage fuel to capacity. Leave some space to allow for expansion of fuel during hot weather.

This pamphlet is intended to serve as a guide and is not exhaustive.
INTRODUCTION

People use chemicals in their home every day. Not all household chemicals are dangerous. Some chemicals such as sugar and baking soda are safe for consumption. Other household products may contain various chemicals which if not properly handled, stored and disposed may present a risk to human health or the environment.

The aim of this pamphlet is to raise public awareness on the dangers related to hazardous household chemicals.

Chemicals can affect humans due to their toxicity or they may cause allergies. Examples include detergents, bleaching solutions, paints, inks, glues, bathroom and drain cleaners.

CLASSIFICATION AND LABELING OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

Chemical substances and mixtures are classified in accordance to the hazards they present, namely physical (e.g. explosive, corrosive, etc.), health (potential to cause cancer, to irritate the skin or eyes, etc.) and environmental (e.g. harmful to the aquatic environment, etc.).

Hazardous household chemicals can be further classified into the following broad groups:

- Corrosive materials such as drain cleaners and rust removers containing acids and/or bases. These are potentially dangerous to the skin and eyes.
- Flammable materials such as gasoline and spirit alcohol. There is risk of fire if stored improperly.
- Explosive materials such as aerosol containers and gas cylinders which can explode under certain conditions.
- Reactive materials such as bleach (eau de javel) or dish detergents containing chlorine bleach. When mixed with ammonia or acids will release toxic gases (e.g. chloramines, chlorine).
- Toxic materials such as pesticides that may cause health hazard if inhaled or ingested.

Hazardous chemicals are labeled with the following hazard symbols and pictograms, namely explosive, gas under pressure, irritant/harmful, flammable, corrosive, health hazard, oxidizer, toxic or environment hazard.

A household product may contain one or more of these symbols as illustrated below.