

# Aerosol Cans

Aerosol spray cans are used to dispense such personal care products as deodorants or hair spray in addition to many other products addressed separately in this manual. The personal care product itself may contain hazardous active ingredients. The propellants may be hazardous as well. Some propellant ingredients in aerosol personal care products include methylene chloride, nitrous oxide, o-phenyl phenol, propane, trichloroethane, or trichloroethylene. Some of the propellant components are considered toxic, flammable, poisonous, and an eye and skin irritant. In addition, older products may have propellants that are ozone-depleting substances. There is also the possibility that aerosol cans may burst, because the contents are pressurized.

## **Source Reduction**      **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

Alternatives to using aerosol products include using products that are in a pump-spray or some other non-aerosol means of dispensing the product (e.g. roll-on or stick deodorants).

If you must purchase an aerosol product:

- buy only as much as needed; and
- purchase aerosols that use carbon dioxide as a propellant.

## **Recycling/Reuse Options**      **TRY THIS NEXT**

The empty steel can is recyclable; however, not every community accepts aerosol cans in their recycling program. Contact the local recycling coordinator or local recycling center for information on recycling the container. In addition, 1-800-CLEANUP maintains a list of recycling sites sorted by zip code. Access this resource on the web at [www.1800cleanup.org](http://www.1800cleanup.org).

## **Disposal**      **LAST RESORT**

If the aerosol can cannot be recycled, then read and follow the product's label for the manufacturer's instructions on proper disposal. Under state law, if generated by household use, aerosol cans may be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill.

## Fingernail Polish and Polish Remover

Fingernail polish is used to color the surface of nails. Polish remover is used to remove polish from the surface of nails. These products may contain acetone, benzene, ethyl acetate, titanium dioxide, butyl acetate, polyurethane, propylene glycol, formaldehyde resin, phenol, toluene, tricresyl phosphate, or xylene. Some components of fingernail polish and remover are considered flammable, toxic, poisonous, and an irritant to skin and eyes.

### **Source Reduction**      **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

Toluene-free nail polishes are available, as well as nail polish and remover that do not contain formaldehyde.

### **Recycling/Reuse Options**      **TRY THIS NEXT**

Fingernail polish and remover are not recyclable. The rinsed nail polish remover containers may be recyclable. For more information on recycling the container, read the product's label or contact your manufacturer or your local recycling center.

### **Disposal**      **LAST RESORT**

If the nail polish and remover cannot be used up or given away, then read and follow the product's label for the manufacturer's instructions on proper disposal. Contact the local recycling coordinator to see if a HHW collection program is scheduled for your area. Their number can be accessed at 1-800-CLEANUP or [www.1800cleanup.org](http://www.1800cleanup.org) on the Internet. Under state law, if generated by household use, solidified fingernail polish and remover can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. To solidify nail polish, remove the nail polish cap and let the polish evaporate. For nail polish remover, place it in a well ventilated area without the cap, and allow it to evaporate. The containers can then be placed in the landfill.

**Fingernail polish and remover should not be poured down drains (inside and outside), into a storm sewer, or on the ground.**

## Medicine and Medical Waste

Medical waste includes such things as syringes, glass, bandages or bags contaminated with blood, and colostomy bags. Expired or unwanted medicine can be toxic.

### Source Reduction

Not available.

### Recycling/Reuse Options

Medicine and medical waste are not recyclable. Do not give away old medicine.

### Disposal

Read and follow the prescription label for the manufacturer's instructions on proper disposal. Under state law, medicine can be legally disposed in one of two ways. If connected to a city sewer system, small amounts of medicine (except for cancer treatment drugs and lice shampoos) may be poured down an inside drain with a large amount of additional water. Contact the local wastewater treatment plant for information. In addition, under state law, if generated by household use, solidified medicine can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. Before attempting to dispose of medicine in this manner, contact the local landfill to find out if they meet this requirement. If curbside waste pick-up is provided, contact the service provider to find out if the waste is being disposed of in a landfill which meets this requirement. Place the solidified medicine in a bag or wrap in newspaper before disposing in a landfill. The empty container should be recycled, if possible. A list of recycling sites can be accessed at 1-800-CLEANUP or [www.1800cleanup.org](http://www.1800cleanup.org) on the Internet. If it cannot be recycled, then the empty container can be disposed of in a landfill. Do not pour old medicine down a drain that is connected to a septic tank system. Those on a septic system should put the old medicine in a heavy plastic bag, tape the bag closed, and place it in a landfill.

Medical waste may be placed in the landfill. Before disposing, wrap the waste in newspaper, place it in a heavy plastic bag, and tape closed.

**Old medicine should not be poured down outside drains, down septic tank systems, into storm sewers, or on the ground. This can cause ground water contamination and/or operational problems with the septic system or POTW.**