



**KENT COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC WORKS**



**HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**  
*Caring today for a healthy tomorrow*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 3/18/19**

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## **Kent County encourages residents to safely dispose of unused hazardous materials during National Poison Prevention Week**

*SafeHomes programs offer safe solutions for disposing of hazardous materials for Kent County residents*

**Grand Rapids, Mich.** – National Poison Prevention Week is March 17-23 and **Kent County's** Department of Public Works (DPW) and (the Kent County) Health Department (KCHD) are encouraging community members to safely dispose of unused, potentially poisonous medicines, chemicals and used needles through the various SafeHomes programs, including SafeMeds, SafeChem and SafeSharps.

“Through these collaborative programs, residents can safely dispose of hazardous products and keep their home safe without the dangers of misuse, accidental poisonings or environmental harm,” says **Adam London**, Administrative Health Officer at KCHD.

“Kent County residents who take these preventative steps in their homes are protecting young children, loved ones, pets and the environment from hazardous materials.”

Every year, America's 55 poison centers receive millions of calls and the majority are about people coming into contact with dangerous or potentially dangerous substances, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

Through the SafeHomes programs, residents can safely dispose of unused or unneeded poisonous and hazardous materials. According to the Kent County DPW, a product is considered hazardous if it has one or more of the following properties:

- Toxic – poisonous or lethal when ingested, touched or inhaled;
- Flammable – ignitable and burns easily;
- Corrosive – eats through materials and living tissue; or
- Reactive – can possibly explode or react with other chemicals;
- Dangerous – poses health or injury risk to people, pets or the environment if not handled properly.

Examples of poisonous hazards may include detergents and cleaning supplies, medicines and pharmaceuticals, insect repellents, oils and fuel, batteries, needles and more.

“Most landfills are not equipped to handle hazardous materials and placing them in the trash or down the drain could lead to injuries to waste handling personnel, fires or harm to the environment,” said **Dar Baas**, Director of the Department of Public Works. “We are committed to protecting public health through the responsible disposal of hazardous materials and we encourage residents to properly dispose of these materials when they are no longer needed.”

There are **SafeChem** drop-off locations for home chemicals in Kentwood, Grand Rapids, Rockford and Wyoming. They are available for all Kent County residents to use at no cost. For hours and contact information, visit [www.MIsafehomes.org](http://www.MIsafehomes.org).

**SafeMeds** Program drop-off locations for prescription and over-the-counter medications include many local pharmacies and law enforcement agencies. These drop-off locations are for any resident to use at no cost. For more information, visit [www.MIsafehomes.org](http://www.MIsafehomes.org).

**SafeSharps** drop-off locations for used needles, lancets or other injection devices are at all KCHD clinics. These drop-off locations are for any Kent County resident to use at no cost. For more information, visit [www.MIsafehomes.org](http://www.MIsafehomes.org).

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