



## DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAII

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### **How Can You Help Protect Source Water? You Can Make a Difference**

The Department of Water Supply wishes to remind the community of the importance of protecting the quality of our *source waters*, which are the reservoirs, aquifers and springs that provide our drinking water. The best way to help protect our community's source water is to prevent contamination in the first place.

There are a number of **everyday actions** you can take to help:

**Dispose of harmful materials properly.** Don't pour hazardous waste down the drain, on the ground, or into storm sewers. Lots of products used at home contain hazardous or toxic substances that can contaminate ground or surface waters, such as:

- Household cleaners
- Motor oil
- Leftover paints or thinners
- Lawn and garden chemicals such as pesticide and fertilizers

Hawai'i County's Department of Environmental Management offers periodic hazardous household waste collection events. Call 808-961-8083 to find out when the next event is scheduled in your area. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has advice on how to safely manage and reduce the use of hazardous waste materials. Visit <https://www.epa.gov/hw/household-hazardous-waste-hhw> . Also the County's Household Hazardous Waste webpage at <https://www.hawaiizerowaste.org/recycle/household-hazardous-waste/> to learn which local businesses collect select hazardous waste materials in limited quantities.

**Dispose of your medications properly.** Do not flush them down the toilet or sink. The EPA encourages the public to take advantage of pharmaceutical take-back collection programs, which provide a safe and environmentally-conscious way to dispose of unwanted medicines. For more information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/hwgenerators/collecting-and-disposing-unwanted-medicines> .Link to the County Department of Environmental Management's Zero Waste webpage for the next Prescription Drugs Take-Back Day: <http://hawaiizerowaste.org> .

**Limit your use of pesticides and fertilizers**, many of which contain harmful chemicals which can contaminate the groundwater or runoff in stormwater to rivers, streams and the ocean. Always follow the label instructions. The EPA evaluates pesticides to ensure that when they are used according to label instructions, they will not harm people, non-target species and the environment.

Homeowners with **septic systems** should have their septic systems inspected to ensure their integrity at least every *three* years by a septic service professional, according to the EPA. Find out more by visiting <https://www.epa.gov/septic/septicsmart-homeowners> .

*... Water, Our Most Precious Resource... Ka Wai A Kāne...*

The Department of Water Supply is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



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**Volunteer in our community.** You can make a difference in protecting our source water by joining in a beach or stream cleanup. Contact a local watershed partnership or the State Department of Fish and Wildlife for upcoming community events.

***Mahalo nui loa for your kōkua!***

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