

# CITY OF MUSCATINE



COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
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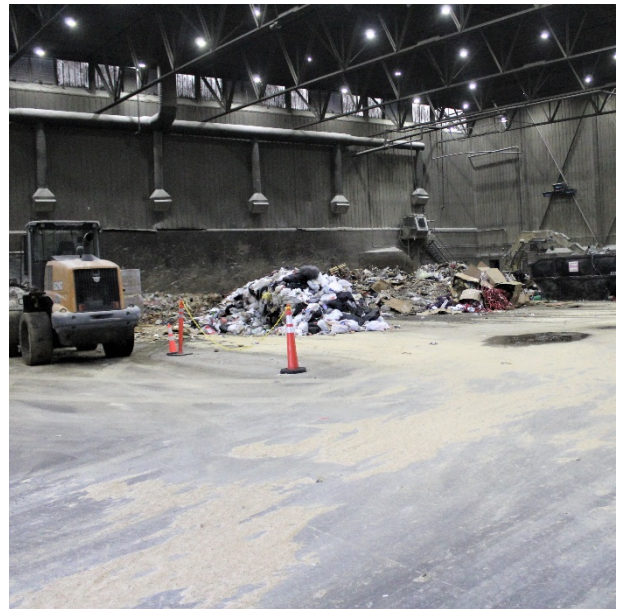
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## CAUSE UNDETERMINED FOR TRANSFER STATION FIRE

Reminder: Proper disposal of Household Hazardous Waste prevents dangerous incidents

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – Common household items such as cleaners, paints, batteries, and pesticides can pose serious safety and environmental risks if not disposed of properly. These items, categorized as Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), can catch fire, react, or explode under certain conditions, and many are corrosive or toxic.

A recent fire at the Muscatine Transfer Station highlights just how dangerous improper disposal can be. At 11:34 a.m. on Sunday, June 1, the Muscatine and Fruitland Fire Departments responded to a structure fire in the refuse area of the facility. Crews spent over two hours battling the blaze using water, foam, and heavy equipment to contain it. Fortunately, the facility's sprinkler system helped prevent the fire from spreading.



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Battalion Chief Joe Timmsen noted that the investigation continues into how the fire started and how long it had been burning.

"There was heavy smoke and fire when we arrived and it took a while to spread the trash out so we could put out all the hot spots," Timmsen said. "There was all sorts of material that had burned in that location which makes it hard to determine an exact cause."

While the fire's cause remains under investigation, Solid Waste Manager David Popp emphasized that improperly discarded household hazardous items are often a factor in these incidents.

"We do not know how the fire started, but we do know that many times these fires are caused by improperly disposed of household hazardous waste. Household rechargeable batteries and hazardous chemicals should never be thrown in the trash," said Popp. "Muscatine County and Louisa County residents can safely dispose of these items at the Transfer Station's drop-off location."

## **Drop-Off is Free for Residents**

Residents of Muscatine and Louisa counties can bring household hazardous materials to the Muscatine Transfer Station at no charge during business hours:

### **Muscatine Transfer Station – 1000 S. Houser St.**

- **Monday–Friday:** 7:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
- **Saturday:** 8:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Businesses should contact Solid Waste Manager David Popp for disposal guidelines.

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## What is Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)?



HHW includes products that are:

- **Flammable** – Easily catch fire (e.g., paint, solvents)
- **Corrosive** – Can burn skin or materials (e.g., drain cleaners, batteries)
- **Reactive** – May explode or emit toxic gases (e.g., old chemicals, aerosol cans)
- **Toxic** – Harmful if inhaled, ingested,

or touched (e.g., pesticides, thinners)

These materials are found in nearly every home—in basements, garages, kitchens, and bathrooms—and often go unnoticed as potential hazards.

Although rechargeable batteries last longer than conventional batteries, they eventually lose power, and when they cannot be recharged, they need special handling according to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Due to the presence of corrosive chemicals, toxins such as mercury and lead, and charged electrodes, all batteries pose hazards and risk of fire, but the biggest risk lies with rechargeable batteries.

Rechargeable batteries should not be placed in the trash and should never be tossed in your recycling bin. When an item is labeled "recyclable", that simply means it can be recycled in

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some way; it doesn't mean that it can be put in your recycling bin. Rechargeable, Lithium-Ion batteries can be recycled, but only at specified locations.

## Safe Use, Storage, and Disposal Tips

To protect your family, sanitation workers, and the environment:

### When using hazardous products:

- Follow label instructions carefully
- Wear protective gear as recommended
- Avoid mixing chemicals
- Use only the amount needed and store the rest securely

### When storing products:

- Keep in original containers with labels intact
- Store out of reach of children and pets
- Avoid placing near food or heat sources

### When disposing:

- Do **not** pour down drains, dump in ditches, or throw in the trash
- Take materials to your nearest Regional Collection Center (RCC)
- Contact your local solid waste agency for disposal and recycling options

## What Happens After Drop-Off?

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At the Muscatine RCC, your items are safely sorted and stored in sealed barrels. A licensed contractor later transports the waste to certified facilities for proper disposal, ensuring no harm comes to our community or environment.

## Learn More

- [City of Muscatine – Household Hazardous Waste](#)
- [Iowa DNR – Household Hazardous Materials](#)
- [EPA – Safe Management of HHW](#)
- [Bring It In, We All Win – YouTube Video](#)

**Help protect your home and community—dispose of HHW the right way.**