

NASA-LaRC SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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LOOKING FOR EAR MUFFS ?

Industrial Hygiene has received numerous requests recently for approval to get ear muffs (hearing protectors) from the stock system. Approval from Industrial Hygiene is no longer needed to get ear muffs. Ear muffs may be obtained with Branch Head or higher approval. They can be found in the LaRC Stock Stores Catalog on page 1 of the General Section, GG2080, entitled "Aural Protector, Sound", Stock Number 4240-00-011-2946. Issuance is limited to one pair per stock request.

SAFELY DISCARDING HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS

Thoughtlessly discarding an unused cleaning product is at odds with America's concern with the environment. Using the entire product is the most efficient way to answer the disposal question. If you can't use it, try to find someone who can. If it isn't possible to find a user, proper disposal is the next choice.

To insure safe disposal, check the label. Some cleaning products require special handling. If no instructions are given, it is safe to dispose of most cleaning products the same way they are used. However, some should be treated as hazardous waste. The following are examples of some safe disposal methods.

Water-soluble products (used or rinsed with water for cleaning) - These products can be poured down the drain. This includes all-purpose cleaners, bleaches, dishwashing and laundry products, toilet bowl cleaners and water based metal cleaners and polishes. Run the water when discarding the material.

Water-soluble aerosol products, such as spray starches and tub-and tile cleaners, can also be discarded by spraying them down the drain with running water. Never mix cleaning products, even during disposal, as certain combinations may release dangerous gases.

With down-the-drain disposal, these cleaning products will end up at a municipal sewage treatment plant or a household septic system, both of which are equipped to handle them. Water-soluble cleaning products are formulated to be treated in these systems and then safely released into the environment.

Solid cleaning products - Items such as soap bars, soap pads and towelettes, should be disposed of in the trash.

Solvent-based products - These are materials that are not mixed or rinsed with water for use. These items should be disposed of as household hazardous waste. Contact your local Public Works Department for local procedures. This category includes spot removers, some metal and furniture cleaners, and any product labeled as flammable. When in doubt about how to dispose of a product, call the toll-free number on the label.

(Extension Echoes - Virginia Cooperative Extension, June 1993))

COMPUTER EYE STRAIN

Japanese researchers at the Tokyo Dental College believe they have figured out why people get tired eyes from staring at computer screens. Apparently, people blink less and their tear film evaporates faster when they work with computers, so they get dry eyes, which in turn causes eye strain. The remedy ? Change the height of the screen.

When the office worker looks down rather than straight ahead, his eye openings are smaller. Therefore, the tear film on the eyes dries more slowly and keeps them moist. The researchers suggest lowering the video screen and tilting it upward for ideal placement.