Reducing toxic chemicals in your home.

WLSSD

A healthy environment starts at home

Contents

Our first environment is the home. It's the backdrop of daily living and the launching point for all of life's adventures. A healthy home is vital for healthy families and healthy communities, and ultimately contributes to the health of the environment – the natural ecosystem. Many of the products we use every day can affect the health and safety of our homes, our families and the quality of our natural environment. This booklet contains helpful, easy tips to identify, manage and reduce the use of household hazardous products.

Reducing toxic chemicals in your home

In the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD), we live on the shore of an incredible freshwater asset that shapes our region's geography, weather and way of life. Residents love this lake and the many other local waterways, and value their contribution to making this region a good place to live and raise a family. In many ways, the health of our waters and the health of our families are closely linked.

According to the EPA, only a small fraction of the more than 75,000 registered chemicals have gone through complete testing for human health concerns.

The risk of toxic chemicals

Chemicals play an important role in our lives. Families can be exposed to chemicals through the foods we eat, medicines we take, products we use and the yards in which we play. These chemicals can also end up in Lake Superior and other local waters. There are reasons to be cautious about our exposure to some chemicals.

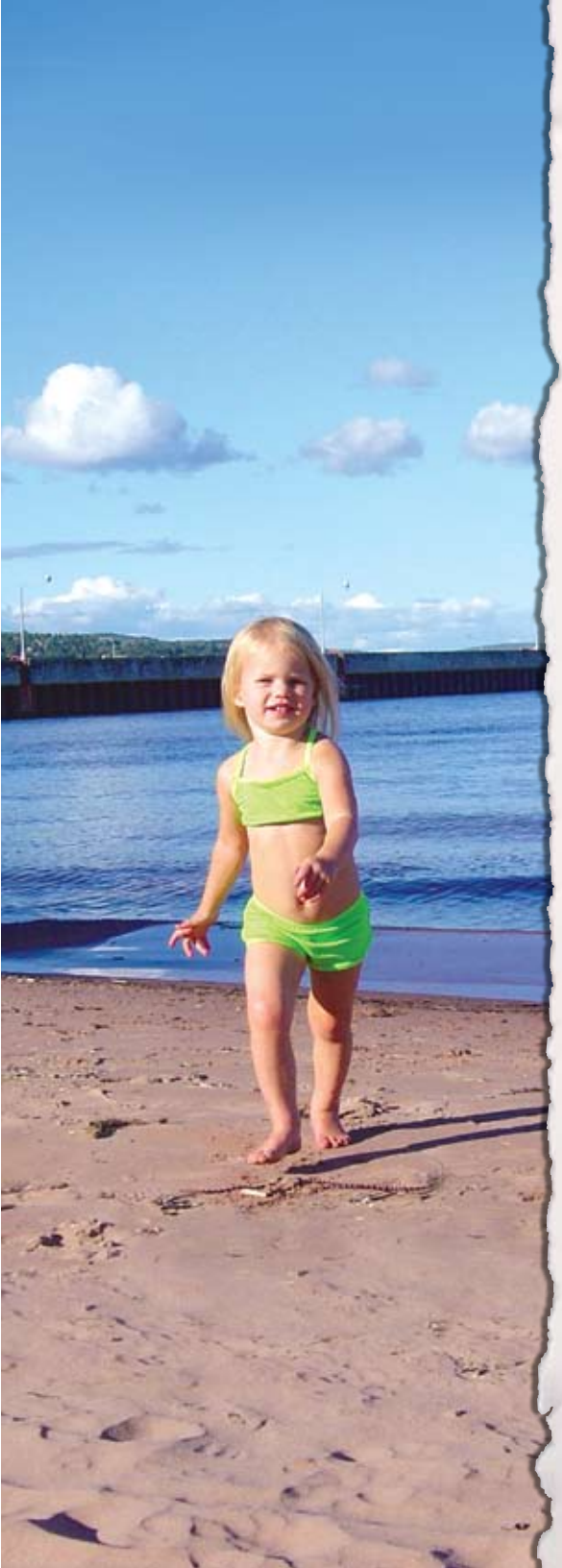
Health concerns

Some chemicals cause no known health issues, while others have immediate toxic effects. Others may be toxic to our bodies only after repeated, long-term exposure. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), only a small fraction of the more than 75,000 registered chemicals have gone through complete testing for human health concerns.

Risks for children

Children are especially susceptible to the negative effects of chemicals because their bodily systems are still developing, and they eat, drink and breathe more in proportion to their body size than adults. They explore their environment on hands and knees and use their mouths as extensions of their fingers, which may expose them to more pollutants.

Because of this, it's important to be mindful when purchasing, using, storing and disposing of household hazardous products.



What can you do to keep your family and our waters healthy?

Read this booklet

You'll learn about less toxic alternatives and proper disposal of household hazardous waste. Save this booklet as a reference.

Adjust your habits

Rather than apply pesticides to kill a few weeds, pull them up by hand. Clean spills immediately instead of letting them dry, which makes them more difficult to remove. If you must use a hazardous product, buy only the amount you need, so you have no leftover product to discard.

Shop wisely

Use non-toxic or less toxic products, or make your own. When purchasing products, look for NON-TOXIC or CAUTION on the label, since they will be the least toxic. Avoid those labeled WARNING or DANGER. Carefully follow package directions.

Store hazardous products in their original containers away from children and pets. Read the safety and storage information provided by the manufacturer.

Use your local Household Hazardous Waste Facility

WLSSD operates a year-round facility at 27th Avenue West and the Waterfront in Duluth. Carlton County operates a facility at the Transfer Station on Highway 210 (see page 30). These facilities offer free disposal of household hazardous waste as well as trained staff to answer questions. They can handle almost any household hazardous waste, even those "mystery" products that you find in unlabeled cans and jars in your basement or garage.

What are household hazardous products?

By definition, household hazardous products are consumer products that are toxic, corrosive, reactive, flammable or explosive. *Product labels will contain the words CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER or POISON.* If not used properly, these products can cause skin irritation, headaches, respiratory ailments or other symptoms. Most of these products should not be poured down drains or on the ground, or thrown in the garbage because they can affect local streams, rivers and lakes. We rely on these resources for drinking water, recreation and commerce.

How do hazardous products affect streams, rivers and Lake Superior?

Many household hazardous products can end up in the St. Louis River estuary, Lake Superior and other local waters through improper disposal and even through proper use. When these products are poured or rinsed down the drain in your home or garage, they travel through the sewer system to the WLSSD Wastewater Treatment Plant, which discharges cleaned water into the St. Louis River. Although the treatment plant provides treatment to the wastewater it receives, the process is not designed to remove all of the substances in some of these products. Some may pass through the treatment plant and reach the St. Louis River and Lake Superior.

Keep hazardous products out of landfills

If hazardous products are put in the trash, they can end up in our local waters. Trash from homes and businesses in northeastern Minnesota are disposed of in regional landfills. Today's landfills are carefully engineered and constructed to prevent "leachate" from reaching ground or surface waters. Leachate is created when water from rain or snow melt passes through trash in the landfill. Collected leachate is either sent directly to a local sanitary sewer system or stored and hauled to a wastewater treatment plant for treatment. For the protection of these wastewater treatment facilities and our local water resources, it is always the best practice to keep hazardous household products from ever reaching a landfill.

Words such as CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER and POISON indicate a product is hazardous and the severity of the hazard. Products labeled POISON are the most hazardous. CAUTION signals the lowest hazard level.

Household hazardous products can end up in the St. Louis River estuary, Lake Superior and other local waters through improper disposal and even through proper use.

In this booklet...

You will see some items marked with an icon indicating product handling instructions or tips for using an alternative product.

Do not pour

Certain substances should not be poured down sink or shower drains or in street drains. Proper disposal guidelines are provided.

Household Hazardous Waste

These items should be taken to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Alternatives

We provide tips and alternative methods to avoid substances that may be harmful to the environment.

In the kitchen

Many common household cleaners contain ammonia, bleach or lye, which can be irritating to skin, eyes, nose and throat, and can cause respiratory problems when not used properly.

You can achieve a clean house without using a multitude of hazardous products by making your own simple, effective household cleaners, or purchasing less toxic brands. Less toxic cleaning products are becoming increasingly available.

The language of clean

Cleaning and disinfecting are not the same. Cleaning removes germs from surfaces – whereas disinfecting actually destroys them.

Cleaning is important

Cleaners and detergents remove soil, dirt, dust and organic matter. When you clean, you remove those substances and the germs that may be associated with them.

Sweeping, wiping, vacuuming and scrubbing remove dirt, oil, grease and other sticky substances that can trap microorganisms on surfaces or help them grow. Cleaning with soap and water is usually enough.

Disinfect selectively

Disinfectants actually kill germs and are specifically registered with the EPA. They should be used after cleaning in order to work best, and users should follow all directions on the product label. Most disinfectants need to stand for a few minutes to be fully effective.

Disinfectants should be used in areas where there are large numbers of dangerous germs and a possibility they could be spread (think kitchen and bath). Disinfection is especially important when handling food. It's best to limit the use of disinfecting products to areas where it is necessary. Overusing antimicrobial products may lead to the spread of "super bugs" – germs that are resistant to disinfectants.

Homemade cleaning products

These are generally free of toxic chemicals, but that doesn't mean they are safe for kids or pets to ingest. If you make your own cleaning products, it's important to label the container appropriately. Labeling recommendations and recipes for homemade cleaning products can be found on page 8.

You can achieve a clean house without using a multitude of hazardous products by making your own simple, effective household cleaners.

Making it easier: U.S. EPA Design for the Environment Program

Choosing the safest products for your family and the environment can be confusing. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allows safer products to carry the Design for the Environment (DfE) logo. This mark enables consumers to quickly identify and choose products that can help protect the environment and are safer for families.

When you see the DfE logo on a product, it means the DfE scientific review team has screened each ingredient for potential human health and environmental effects and that – based on current available information, EPA predictive models, and expert judgment – the product contains only those ingredients that pose the least concern among chemicals in their class. The logo helps a busy shopper select a safer choice that won't sacrifice quality or performance.

In the kitchen

When making your own cleaning products

- Label containers with the ingredients inside.
- List a discard date (1 to 2 weeks) to prevent spoiling.
- Store in secure containers out of reach of children and pets.

Recipes

All purpose cleaners:

Mix a small amount of liquid soap with water in a spray bottle and clean with a wet sponge, or mix baking soda with water and apply with a wet sponge.

Try this recipe for a slightly more complex homemade cleaner:
1/4 cup white vinegar
2 tsp. borax
3 1/2 cups hot water
1/4 cup liquid dish soap

In a 32 oz. spray bottle, mix the vinegar, borax and water thoroughly. Add dish soap last to avoid foaming when you are mixing the other ingredients.

Floor cleaners:

Mix 1/8 cup liquid soap and 1/2 cup vinegar in 2 gallons of water. Swish ingredients and use to wash floors. For no-wax linoleum floors, leave out the vinegar. Rinse floors with clean water or club soda.

Drain cleaners:

For a completely clogged drain, use a plunger or plumber's snake to dislodge clogged material. For a slow moving drain, pour 1/4 cup of baking soda down the drain followed by 1/4 cup of vinegar. Let sit 15 minutes, then pour a quart of boiling water down the drain.

Automatic dishwashing detergent:

Read the label and consider using a brand that is chlorine-free. Try using half the amount of commercial dishwashing detergent and add 1/4 to 1/2 cup of baking soda to the dishwasher along with your detergent.

Oven cleaners:

Most commercial oven cleaners contain lye, also known as sodium hydroxide. They can burn skin and eyes if used improperly. Products containing sodium hydroxide should have DANGER on the label. There are commercial products that do not contain lye, making them non-caustic.

To avoid tough stains, clean your oven at least once per month. Clean spills as soon as the oven cools, before they bake on. If you are cooking a messy dish, put aluminum foil on the oven bottom to catch spills.

Try these homemade options: Mix 1 part vinegar to 4 parts water in spray bottle. Spray onto cool oven surfaces and scrub.

Or, mix a cup or more of baking soda with just enough water to form a wet paste. Apply liberally to residue, sprinkle with additional water and let sit overnight. Wipe off with a damp rag or sponge.

Fats, oils and grease

Although fats, cooking oils and grease are not hazardous, they coat the inside of pipes and sewer lines. If you pour grease and oil down the drain, the grease builds up, eventually blocking the flow in the pipes.

This can result in sewage back-ups in your home or overflows further down the line. Back-ups and overflows pose potential health and environmental hazards, and can result in costly cleaning and repairs.

Do not pour grease or cooking oil down the drain or dispose of fat trimmings in the garbage disposal. Instead, pour or scrape into non-recyclable containers, seal and throw them into the trash; or bring liquid waste edible oils (like deep-fat fryer oil) to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility for recycling. Another option for households is to mix small amounts of fat trimmings or solidified grease with other food waste in a compostable bag and bring to a WLSSD Food Waste Drop Site (see page 28).

In the bathroom

Cleaners used in the bathroom have many of the same ingredients as those used in the kitchen, including bleach, ammonia and lye. They can be very irritating to skin, eyes, nose and throat, and can cause respiratory problems.

Alternatives

Toilet cleaners:

Put a couple denture cleaning tablets into the toilet bowl and let stand for a few minutes before scrubbing with a brush.

Shower cleaners:

Wash with diluted liquid soap and then sprinkle with baking soda. Scrub with a nylon scrubbing pad. Rinse with vinegar and water.

Drain cleaners:

Use a hair trap to prevent hair from clogging drains. See page 8 for more suggestions on clearing a clogged drain.

Poison control centers in the United States receive 1.2 million calls annually as a result of accidental poisoning of children ages 5 and younger.

Kids act fast. Poisons act faster.

Poison control centers in the United States receive 1.2 million calls annually as a result of accidental poisoning of children ages 5 and younger. Nearly 90 percent of these toxic exposures occur in the home, and 56 percent involve non-pharmaceutical products such as cosmetics, cleansers, personal care products, plants, pesticides, art supplies, alcohol and toys. Always keep hazardous products out of reach of children, even when an adult is using them.

In the bathroom

Safe disposal of medicine

A common method of disposing of unwanted medication has been to flush it down the toilet or rinse it down the drain. But wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove these medicines, so some pass through the treatment process. When the treated water is released into the St. Louis River, it can still contain traces of these medicines. Although the effects of pharmaceuticals in our waterways are still not completely known, they may impact aquatic life and have been detected at extremely low levels in the drinking water of communities where testing has occurred. Public health officials have not linked the presence of these trace pharmaceuticals to any human health impacts.

What do I do with unwanted medicine?

Always leave it in the original container with labels and store out of reach of children and pets.

Bring items to a medicine collection event or, when collection events or drop-box locations are impractical, carefully dispose of medicine in the trash.

Medicine collection events

Call WLSSD's Hotline at 218-722-0761 for information about medicine collection options. WLSSD has offered Medicine Cabinet Clean-Out events since 2008 at its Household Hazardous Waste Facility in partnership with local law enforcement and hospitals. Increasingly, local law enforcement agencies throughout Minnesota are instituting drop-box programs for unwanted medicines.

Carlton County operates a program called "Take it to the Box" for residents to bring their unwanted medicines to three convenient drop-box locations.

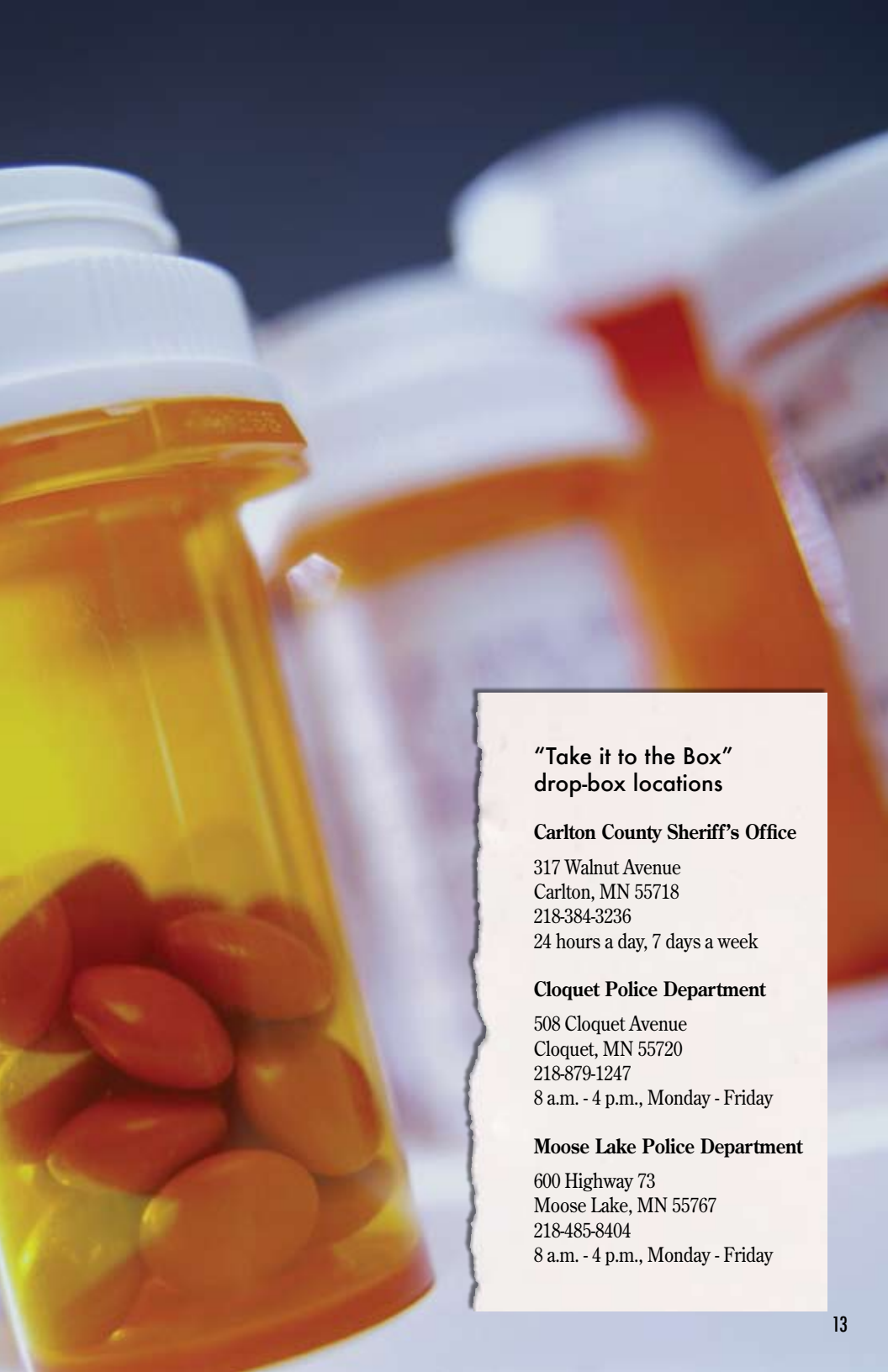
Disposal in the trash

Scratch out the patient's name on the bottle or other packaging. Add liquid, sawdust or spices to destroy the product. Seal container with strong tape. Hide it in a non-transparent container or bag, and throw it away as close to trash pick-up as possible.

Sharps/needles

HHW

Sharps include lancets, hypodermic needles, syringes and scalpel blades. Place them in a rigid, leak-proof, puncture-resistant container with a tight fitting lid (a commercially available sharps container, plastic detergent bottle, pop bottle or other container with a secure lid). Clearly mark the container "SHARPS" and bring it to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility for free, confidential disposal.



"Take it to the Box" drop-box locations

Carlton County Sheriff's Office

317 Walnut Avenue
Carlton, MN 55718
218-384-3236
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Cloquet Police Department

508 Cloquet Avenue
Cloquet, MN 55720
218-879-1247
8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday - Friday

Moose Lake Police Department

600 Highway 73
Moose Lake, MN 55767
218-485-8404
8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday - Friday

In the bathroom

Mercury thermometers

Many old fever thermometers contain mercury, a naturally occurring, dense, silvery metal that is a liquid at room temperature. If it is released from the thermometer, the liquid can evaporate, creating a colorless, odorless vapor that is dangerous if inhaled. Mercury slows fetal and child development by affecting the brain and nervous system and can make adults very sick too.

Alternative: Switch to a digital thermometer. They are mercury-free and are as accurate as mercury thermometers. Mercury thermometers are made of glass and have a silvery-white liquid inside. Bring them to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility for free disposal. Free digital thermometers may be available for exchange while supplies last. Other home thermometers with a red or blue line are alcohol-based and do not contain mercury.

If you break your mercury thermometer

You can clean up the spilled mercury, but you'll need to exercise considerable care.

1. Isolate the spill and ventilate the area. Keep people and pets away from the spill area. Open windows and exterior doors. Close all doors between the room where the spill occurred and the rest of the house. Close all cold air returns so that mercury vapor is not carried throughout the house. Turn down heaters and turn up window air conditioners. Turn off central air conditioning. Turn off fans unless they vent to the outdoors. Use fans to blow mercury-contaminated air outside.
2. If mercury has touched your skin, shoes or clothing, stay still and have someone bring you a plastic trash bag and wet paper towels. Wipe off any visible beads of mercury with the wet paper towels and put them in the trash bag. Check your shirt pockets for mercury. Remove contaminated shoes and clothing and place them in the trash bag. Seal the bag and label it "Mercury – Hazardous". Store it securely in an outdoor area and bring to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility. If you do not have secure storage outside your home, put it in an outside garbage can. Shower well. Do not wash clothes because this could contaminate your water. Mercury also can become trapped in your pipes.
3. If you feel you've inhaled a lot of mercury vapor, call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.
4. Decide whether you can clean up the spill yourself, which you may be able to do if the spill involved a single fever thermometer on a hard, smooth surface. Call the Minnesota Duty Officer at 800-422-0798 to report the spill, day or night. The Duty Officer will put you in touch with an MPCA emergency responder who will advise you on cleaning up the spill.

Never vacuum or sweep up a mercury spill. This will spread the mercury in the air and onto other surfaces, and will contaminate your equipment.

For more information, see the MPCA fact sheet, "Cleaning up spilled mercury in the home," at **www.pca.state.mn.us**

Switch your mercury thermometer to a digital thermometer. They are mercury-free and are as accurate as mercury thermometers.

Keep mercury out of the water

When mercury reaches lakes and waterways, it can undergo a natural chemical process that converts it into a more harmful form called methylmercury. Methylmercury bioaccumulates, or builds up, in the food chain. When methylmercury reaches fish eaten by humans and wildlife, it can be at levels high enough to be harmful. Fetuses are especially vulnerable to mercury in fish eaten by their mothers because it can adversely affect a baby's growing brain and nervous system. Impacts on cognitive thinking, memory, attention, language, and fine motor and visual spatial skills have been seen in children exposed to methylmercury in the womb. Eating fish is healthful and safe when advisories issued by the Minnesota Department of Health are followed.

Minnesota Department of Health fish consumption advice:
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish

Throughout the house

Many household products, such as furniture polish, paint stripper, indoor insecticides, and carpet/upholstery cleaners, contain hazardous chemicals that are released into the air during use or rinsed down the drain when cleaning.

The chemicals in these products can enter our bodies through inhalation, skin contact or accidental ingestion. Some chemicals can cause short-term or long-term health effects. These chemicals can also travel throughout our waterways to Lake Superior. If you use these products, don't pour or flush them down the drain. Use them up entirely or take them to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste facility (see page 30). There are alternatives to using these products. Less toxic commercial products are available, and you can use products already in your home, such as vinegar, baking soda and olive oil. If you make homemade cleaning products, remember to label the containers you store them in and list your ingredients.

Alternative cleaners

Carpet/upholstery cleaners:

For light stains or odors, sprinkle baking soda generously and let sit overnight. Vacuum the next day. For mud, rub salt on the stain and let it rest for at least an hour. Vacuum well. For coffee and red wine, pour club soda on the stain immediately and blot with a sponge. For berry juice, pour a small amount of boiling water on the stain and sponge off. For grease, cover with cornstarch and let it rest for an hour. Rub it in and vacuum.

Furniture cleaners:

Dust with a barely damp cloth and wipe. Or mix 1/2 tsp. of olive oil with 1/2 cup vinegar or lemon juice. Lightly apply mixture to soft cloth and use it to dust, polish and shine furniture. To polish furniture, use a small amount of vegetable oil or pure citrus oil on a cloth. To polish finished wood, use Butcher's Wax one or two times a year.

Less toxic commercial products are available, and you can use products already in your home.


RTON
ED SALT

Throughout the house

Proper disposal of household items

There are a variety of items that are safe to use in your home, but when you no longer need them, proper disposal is a must!

Fluorescent and Compact Fluorescent (CFL) Bulbs

HHW These bulbs are great for your home because they conserve electricity. This means less pollution is created when mercury-containing coal is burned in power plants to create electricity. Burning less coal, in turn, lowers mercury emissions at those facilities and overall mercury pollution in our environment.

Fluorescent bulbs and CFLs do contain a small amount of mercury in order to work. If they are not recycled, they would most likely be buried in landfills, releasing mercury that could travel to the wastewater treatment plant as the leachate is removed. The WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility accepts all types of fluorescent bulbs at no charge from residents. Many local retailers also have bulb collection programs, but not all accept all types. Call to confirm types accepted and fees. Find other local bulb recyclers: **www.earth911.com**

Rechargeable batteries

HHW Rechargeable batteries may contain heavy metals or chemicals that can make their way into the environment if the batteries are not disposed of properly. In many cases, these materials can be recycled. Standard alkaline batteries (A, AA, AAA, C, D) are not hazardous and may be put in the trash. Be sure to read the label. Many types of batteries have the look and feel of alkaline batteries, but contain hazardous substances and must be recycled.

The WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility accepts all batteries for recycling. Find other local battery recyclers at **www.earth911.com**

Electronics

Unwanted electronics (e-waste) are banned from the trash and must be recycled. Televisions, computers, monitors, video players, photocopiers and fax machines may contain toxic materials such as arsenic, mercury, cadmium, lead or benzene. Young children should never play with electronic components. Some plastics and many of the metal components in electronics have value, and can be quickly returned to the market for use in the manufacturing of other electronic equipment. Electronics are accepted at the WLSSD Materials Recovery Center for a fee (see page 30). Find other local electronics recyclers at **www.earth911.com**

Thermostats

HHW The mercury in non-digital thermostats is toxic and harmful if released into the environment. Thermostats are accepted free for recycling at the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

If you break a fluorescent or Compact Fluorescent (CFL) bulb:

When a fluorescent or CFL bulb breaks, some of the mercury it contains turns to vapor immediately. A brief, one-time exposure to this level of mercury vapor is not a health concern. Opening the windows allows fresh air into the room to dilute the mercury vapor. The remaining mercury is attached to the phosphor powder, broken glass and metal. Use stiff paper or cardboard to collect larger pieces and duct tape to collect smaller pieces. Then, wipe with a damp cloth. This process will remove almost all the mercury. If debris remains, vacuum the area with windows open. The fresh air will dilute any vapors created by vacuuming. (Vacuuming before a complete clean up causes more mercury to vaporize into the air.) Take the vacuum outside to change the bag or empty the canister. Place fragments, damp cloth and the vacuum cleaner bag/canister contents in a plastic bag. Seal and store it outside in a safe place away from children until your next trip to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

If you break more than two fluorescent bulbs or if you are unsure what to do, call the Minnesota Duty Officer at 800-422-0798 any time, day or night.

For more information, visit Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: **www.pca.state.mn.us/mvri562** or Minnesota Department of Health: **www.health.state.mn.us**

Throughout the house

Glues and adhesives

HHW Glue products should not be thrown in the trash. Bring unwanted glues and adhesives to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Lighter fluid or charcoal starter

HHW Do not pour lighter fluid or charcoal starter down the drain. To clean up a lighter fluid spill, cover it with kitty litter or other absorbent material, sweep it up and throw it in the trash.

Use a chimney-style charcoal starter, electric coal starter, or grills that use propane or natural gas.

Shoe Polish

HHW Some shoe polishes contain toxic chemicals. Bring unwanted shoe polish to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Beeswax polish: Remove dirt and dust from shoes with a damp washcloth, then dry and buff with a white towel. Melt 2 tablespoons beeswax with one cup of linseed oil (also called flax seed oil). Consider using a non-cookware pan or crockpot as it can be difficult to clean. Pour mixture into a heat-resistant container and let cool. Polish your shoes with a soft cloth.

Lead

Lead poisoning is a concern for both children and adults. It can cause permanent health, learning and behavior problems in young children and high blood pressure, kidney damage and fertility problems in adults.

You can be exposed to lead any time you breathe lead dust or fumes, or swallow anything that contains lead. *About 75 percent of homes built before 1978 contain some lead-based paint.* The older the home, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint. You should assume that any home built before 1978 contains some lead.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) maintains a thorough website: **www.health.state.mn.us/lead** with information on preventing lead poisoning, including details about remodeling homes that may contain lead paint, clean-up and disposal tips, and fact sheets to identify other sources of lead.

Minnesota law currently allows property owners to put lead waste in the trash, but the MDH recommends that residents in communities where trash is incinerated use a household hazardous waste facility instead. Trash in the WLSSD service area is landfilled, not incinerated, so you may put lead waste in the trash. However, these materials are also accepted in small amounts at the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility where it will be disposed of with other hazardous waste at approved facilities. Carefully follow instructions for packaging as detailed on the MDH website.

Consumer recalls of products due to lead hazards are available at the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission website: **www.cpsc.gov**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains a site dedicated to product recalls due to lead. It's organized by category, such as toys, crafts and clothing: **www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/Recalls**

In the garage

Although there are few alternatives to automotive fluids, there are many things that can be done to lessen our vehicles' impact on the environment. The most important thing is to keep vehicles properly maintained. Read and follow your owner's manual. A well-maintained vehicle emits less exhaust into the air and is less likely to leak hazardous fluids into our environment. In the course of maintaining automobiles, motorcycles, boats, lawnmowers and other machines, it is important to dispose of all fluids properly because most are hazardous to human and animal health and to the environment. Keep automotive supplies out of reach of children and bring unwanted supplies to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility (see page 30).

Motor oil

Do not pour used motor oil onto the ground or down the drain in your home or street. Storm drains in streets carry water directly to area streams and on to Lake Superior. This water does not travel to the wastewater treatment plant. It is hazardous to human and animal health and to the environment. If you change the oil in your car yourself, recycle the old oil. Used motor oil can be recycled for free at the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility and at many service stations. Find other motor oil recycling centers: **www.earth911.com**

Antifreeze/brake fluid

Do not pour unused or unwanted antifreeze or brake fluid onto the ground or into a storm sewer or down the drain. It is a serious health hazard to humans and animals if ingested. Bring them to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Gasoline/Kerosene

Unused or unwanted gasoline or kerosene should never be poured onto the ground, into a storm sewer or down the drain. It is harmful to humans and the environment. Store these fuels in proper containers and watch for leaks or spills. These materials should be taken to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Paint thinners/solvents

Paint thinners, solvents and primers are hazardous to human health and the environment. Bring them to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

In the course of maintaining automobiles, motorcycles, boats, lawnmowers and other machines, it is important to dispose of all fluids properly because most are hazardous to human and animal health and to the environment.

In the garage

Car batteries

HHW Lead-acid batteries, used in motor vehicles, ATVs, riding lawn mowers and marine equipment, can contain over 20 pounds of lead and a gallon of sulfuric acid, so it is important that they be recycled. The materials in batteries can be reused in new batteries. Lead-acid battery retailers in Minnesota are required to accept used lead-acid batteries from customers for recycling. They typically charge a fee upon purchase of a new battery that is refundable upon the return of an old one from the customer (often times called a "battery core charge.") The WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility accepts lead-acid batteries for free.

Tires

WLSSD's Materials Recovery Center accepts passenger vehicle tires for free (up to four daily). You can also recycle tires through the retailer from whom you bought new tires. Some accept tires from people who are not purchasing new tires for a small fee.

Roof tar/driveway sealant

HHW The chemicals and fumes in roof tar/driveway sealant are hazardous to humans and can run off and pollute surface water. You can dispose of these substances at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility at no charge.

Oil-based paint

HHW Unused or unwanted oil-based paint is a hazardous material that should not be dumped or thrown in the trash. Take unwanted oil-based paint to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility for free recycling.

Latex paint

Modern latex paint is not hazardous, but it is collected at the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility for recycling or reuse. It can also be thrown out with household trash if it is dried to a solid. It should never be poured down drains.

For small amounts of latex paint, let the liquid evaporate outdoors in a covered area away from children and pets. Discard the can of dried paint in the trash with the lid removed. For larger amounts, recycling is recommended. If recycling is impractical, mix in a drying agent such as kitty litter or saw dust to absorb the liquid, and discard the hardened paint with your household trash.

The Product Reuse Center

Looking for a little dab of something to do a job? Maybe you have a wall, a fence, or something that just needs a good coat of paint? Visit WLSSD's free Product Reuse Room, stocked with paint, cleaners, lawn and automotive products, all pre-owned but perfectly usable and free for the taking. The Reuse Room is open during regular WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility hours (see page 30.)

In the yard

Pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, rodent control chemicals

HHW The purpose of products such as pesticides, insecticides, weed killers and mouse poison is to kill these organisms. But many of these products are also toxic to people, animals, birds and beneficial insects, not just the pests you want to control. Products in this category also include flea killers, mosquito repellent and algae/mildew killers.

If you use pesticides in your yard or around your house, do not over-apply. Read instructions carefully and use only as directed. Take any unwanted chemicals to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Compost yard trimmings or use them for mulch to reduce solid waste and the need for fertilizers or weed killers. Yard waste such as leaves, grass and branches are banned from the garbage. If you don't compost them, bring them to the WLSSD Yard Waste Compost Site (see page 30) or contact your garbage hauler for availability of home pick-up service. Learn more about composting and recycling food waste on page 28.

Pools and hot tubs

Pool chemicals typically contain bromine and chlorine, which are toxic and can cause respiratory illness and eye irritation, especially in children. Follow all instructions for usage and never mix with acids. Take any unwanted pool chemicals to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility (see page 30).

Pools and hot tubs can be cleaned by copper ionization, in which a device sends a safe, low voltage current through a copper electrode, dislodging copper ions into the water. Copper ions have the ability to pierce the cell walls of algae and bacteria, killing them without causing harm to human health. This method may reduce or eliminate the need for chlorine and bromine.

Car washing

Try to use car wash establishments rather than washing vehicles at home. Runoff from home car washing can reach storm drains, which discharge into local waterways and Lake Superior without being treated. Water from commercial car washes goes to the wastewater treatment plant.

If you need to wash your car at home, wash it on your lawn or over dirt so that the dirty water can be absorbed by the soil instead of flowing off driveways into the street and storm drains.

In the yard

Composting

Composting creates a useful product from organic waste that might otherwise be treated as garbage. It not only creates a valuable soil amendment but can also mean a smaller (and less smelly) garbage can.

Compost improves the soil's ability to hold and release the nutrients that are already there. Amending light/sandy soil with compost helps retain moisture, while heavy clay soils "breathe" and drain better after compost is mixed in. Soils amended with compost develop better structure and become less dense and more porous – resulting in vigorous root growth that yields great-looking plants without the use of commercial fertilizers.

Compost and mulch also act as a great weed suppressant. Covering the soil around plants with 2 to 3 inches of compost or other mulch deprives weed seeds of much-needed light and eliminates the need for weed killers.

A better use for food waste

WLSSD residents have two options for keeping valuable organic materials like grass clippings and vegetative food waste out of the landfill: home composting or WLSSD's Yard Waste Compost Site and Food Waste Drop Sites.

Find tips and plans for creating your own home composting operation:
www.wlssd.com/compost_howto.php

Be sure to check local rules regarding placement and management of compost piles, and closely follow instructions about what can be composted at home. Fats, oils, meat, fish, bones and dairy products typically do not belong in home compost piles.

Not a home composter?

WLSSD's Yard Waste Compost Site accepts grass clippings and leaves (free) and brush/branches (for a fee). These materials are banned from the garbage.

Food Waste Drop Sites (free) allow residents to drop off all food waste, including meat, fish, small bones and dairy products, in compostable bags. The food waste is combined with waste from local restaurants and businesses and carefully mixed with yard waste at the large scale composting facility in Duluth. The end product, Garden Green® compost, is available for purchase locally. The use of Garden Green® compost, as described above, will also reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides.

Find drop site locations and hours, plus tips to help you collect food waste at home:
www.wlssd.com/compost.php

Food Waste Drop Sites

WLSSD Yard Waste Compost Site (Open seasonally, April - Nov.)

WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Site (Winter only)

WLSSD Materials Recovery Center

Marshall Hardware (parking lot behind store)

Willard Munger Inn (parking lot)

Chester Creek Cafe (parking lot)

For directions to any of these Drop Sites and their hours of operation, visit **wlssd.com/compost.php**

WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility

2626 Courtland St., Duluth, MN 55806 Open Thursday through Saturday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

WLSSD Yard Waste Compost Site

Accepts grass clippings, leaves, brush and branches. It also has a Food Waste Drop Site. Offers bulk and bagged Garden Green® compost for sale.

2626 Courtland St., Duluth, MN 55806
Open seasonally Friday through Monday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

WLSSD Materials Recovery Center

Accepts mixed waste, appliances, tires, brush, electronics, scrap metal, and household recyclables. It also has a Food Waste Drop Site.

4587 Ridgeview Rd., Duluth, MN 55803
Summer Hours (April through October)
Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Friday and Saturday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Closed Sunday

Winter Hours (November through March)
Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Closed Sunday, Monday

Carlton County Household Hazardous Waste Facility

(for residents of Carlton County)

Located at the Transfer Station
3/4 miles west of Interstate 35
1950 Highway 210, Carlton, MN 55718

Open seasonally Tuesdays and Saturdays
8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Carlton County Transfer Station

Accepts mixed waste, demolition waste, appliances, electronics, tires and brush.

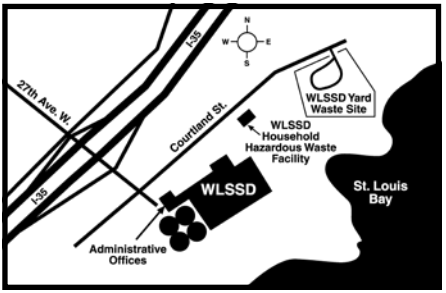
1950 Highway 210, Carlton, MN 55718
Summer Hours (April through October)
Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Closed Sunday

Winter Hours (November through March)
Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Closed Sunday

Please note that hours of operation are current as of the time of this printing. For up-to-date information call 218-722-0761 for WLSSD facilities, or 218-879-9089 for Carlton County facilities.

WLSSD Materials Recovery Center ▶

WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility and Yard Waste Site ▶




AQUAGE

Many thanks to the following organizations that created publications upon which this booklet is based:

How to Reduce Toxic Chemicals in Your Home, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (2009), **www.pca.state.mn.us**

A Healthy Environment Starts at Home, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (2009), **www.neorsd.org**

A Healthy Environment Starts at Home, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (2005), **www.mwra.com**

Funding for this publication was provided in part through a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a program of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

EPA Great Lakes RESTORATION

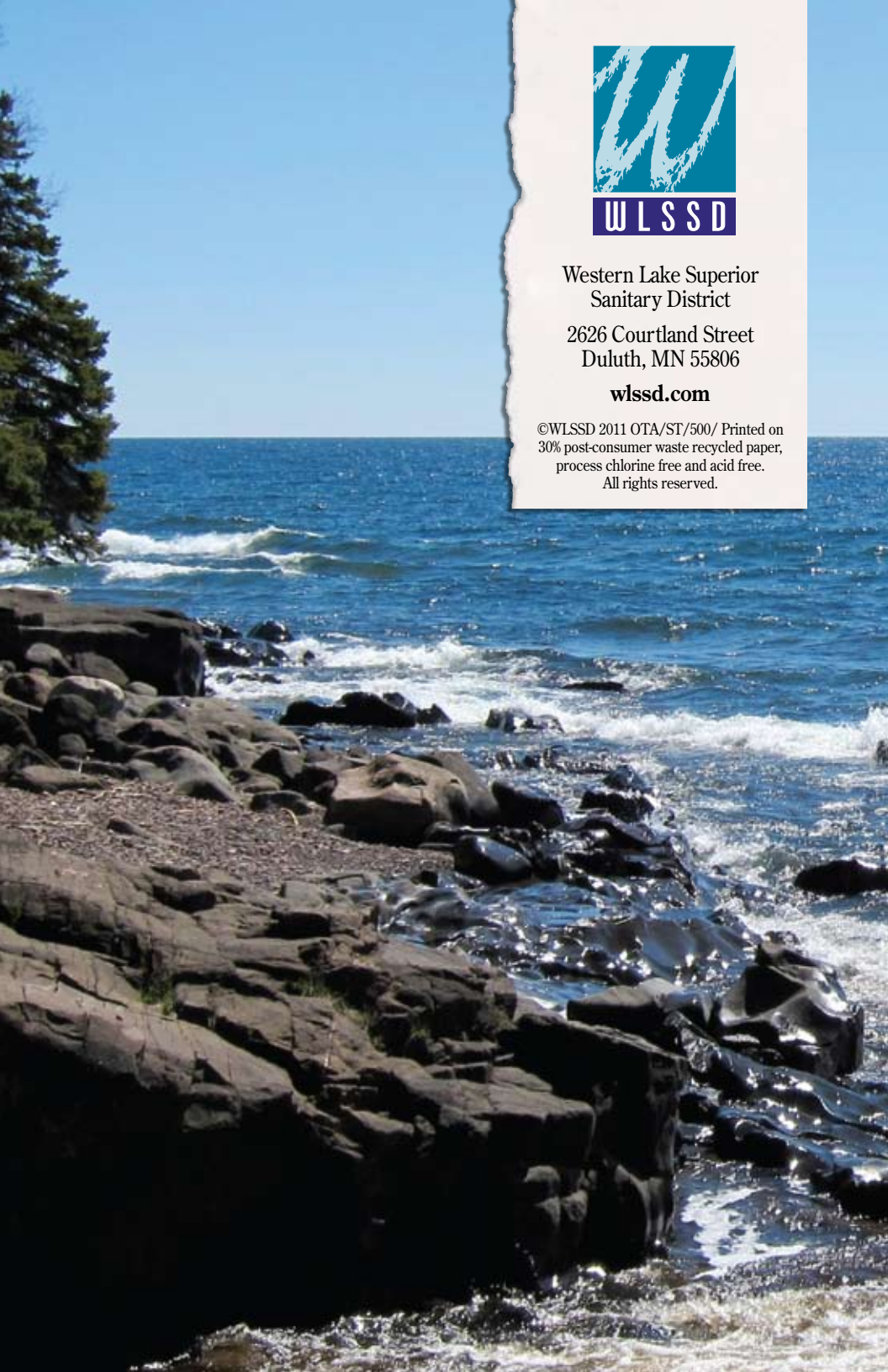
About WLSSD

The Western Lake Superior Sanitary District provides solid waste management oversight and wastewater services for a 530 square mile region in Minnesota that includes Duluth, Cloquet, Hermantown, Proctor, Carlton, Scanlon, Thomson and Wrenshall, and the surrounding townships.

WLSSD operates a wastewater treatment facility, organic waste composting site, hazardous waste collection site and solid waste transfer station in Duluth's Lincoln Park neighborhood. WLSSD also operates the Materials Recovery Center in Rice Lake Township, where residents and small commercial customers can drop off many waste materials for recycling, recovery or disposal.

WLSSD is a special purpose unit of government created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1971 to address serious environmental pollution problems in the lower St. Louis River Basin. It is governed by a nine-member citizen Board of Directors.

WLSSD



Western Lake Superior
Sanitary District

2626 Courtland Street
Duluth, MN 55806

wlssd.com