



# LA CROSSE COUNTY

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## 2019

La Crosse County Household Hazardous  
Materials Program Annual Report to  
Stakeholders



**La Crosse County Household Hazardous Materials Facility**  
**3202 Berlin Drive**  
**La Crosse, WI 54601**  
**(608) 785-9999**

**Staff**

Greg Smith  
HHM Technician  
La Crosse County Solid Waste Dept.  
Household Hazardous Waste Facility  
3202 Berlin Drive  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: 608-785-6244  
gsmith@lacrossecounty.org

Kirk Hackbarth  
HHM Technician  
La Crosse County Solid Waste Dept.  
Household Hazardous Waste Facility  
3202 Berlin Drive  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: 608-789-7883  
khackbarth@lacrossecounty.org

Brian Smith  
HHM Technician  
La Crosse County Solid Waste Dept.  
Household Hazardous Waste Facility  
3202 Berlin Drive  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: 608-789-4505  
bsmith@lacrossecounty.org

Scott Szymanski  
Operations Manager  
La Crosse County Solid Waste Dept.  
Household Hazardous Waste Facility  
3202 Berlin Drive  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: 608-789-7862  
sszymanski@lacrossecounty.org

Jadd Stilwell  
Director  
La Crosse County Solid Waste Dept.  
Household Hazardous Waste Facility  
3200 Berlin Drive  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: 608-785-9769  
jstilwell@lacrossecounty.org

**Website:** <http://www.lacrossecounty.org/SolidWaste/hhm.asp>

## **Mission, History and Scope**

In September of 2001, the Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Panel (HHWAP) to the Solid Waste Committee recommended the formation of a Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) program to be housed in a permanent facility at the La Crosse County Landfill. This vision became a reality with the opening of the HHM facility in the fall of 2003. For the past 17 years, the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department has continuously operated the HHM program, accepting hazardous waste from households, farms and qualifying small businesses. The HHWAP envisioned a program that would “effectively remove toxic and dangerous household hazardous wastes from the waste stream in a cost-effective manner that is satisfactory to the users and adapts to meet the changing needs of the county residents.”

Responding to this vision and to the needs of the community, the HHM program has expanded the wastes that it accepts from common household chemicals to include electronics (e-waste), fluorescent lamps, batteries, oil filters, appliances containing refrigerants (such as Freon), non-controlled pharmaceuticals, sharps and red bag medical waste.

The purpose of this report is to keep the stakeholders of the La Crosse County Household Hazardous Materials program informed about its status.

## **Program Benefits**

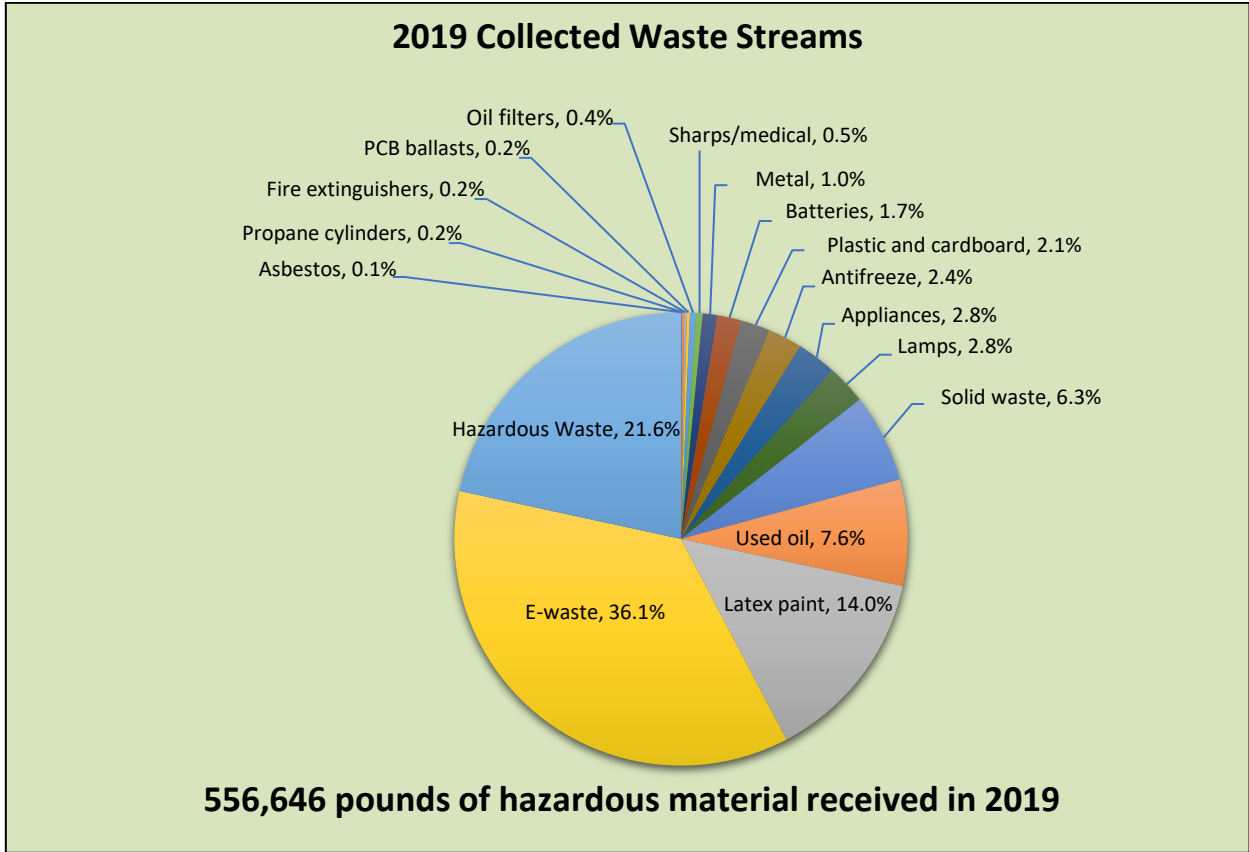
The HHM program continues to serve the community in many ways. While assuring the proper disposal of hazardous waste is the highest priority, much of the waste accepted by the HHM program can be reused or recycled. Of the 556,646 pounds of materials collected in 2019, 78% was recycled, directly reused or processed into an industrial fuel. Diverting hazardous materials through the HHM program keeps these materials out of the landfill, eliminating the risk of their release into the environment.

Included in these diversion totals is 82,352 pounds of usable products that were given back to the community through the Reuse Room. With an estimated retail value of \$1.50/pound, the product worth returned to the community in 2019 was nearly \$124,000. This greatly benefited the citizens who were able to use the products and provided a more environmentally sustainable option for these reusable materials. In addition, products utilized for reuse saved the facility over \$118,500 in disposal costs.

E-waste is a significant contributor to the volume of waste collected. Recycling e-waste ensures that valuable materials are recovered and not disposed of. The HHM program works cooperatively with area recyclers to ensure the materials are being managed in a responsible, cost effective manner. In Wisconsin, manufacturers are responsible for some of the cost of recycling the electronics that they produce. Since this legislation passed, a viable electronics recycling market has developed.

Removing hazardous materials from the waste stream improves the performance of the landfill and the Xcel Waste-to-Energy facility. Liquid wastes, including latex paint, have a negative impact on Xcel’s ability to process burnable waste into refuse-derived fuel. When oil-based paints and solvents are disposed in the garbage, many will end up being buried in the landfill. Volatile organic compounds and hazardous air pollutants, which are contained in paints and solvents, escape into the air.

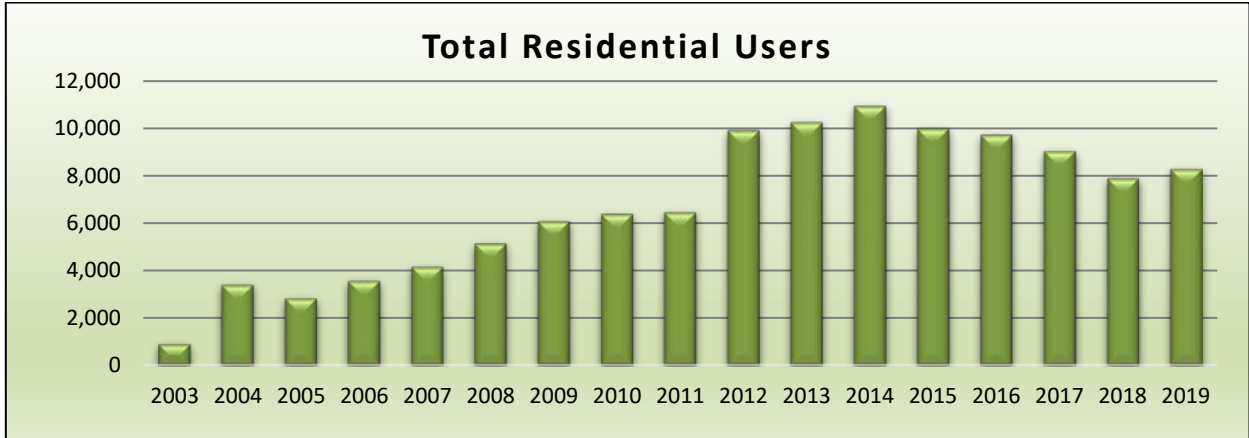
The 556,546 pounds of hazardous materials received at the HHM facility in 2019 were delivered in the following proportions:



### Program Utilization

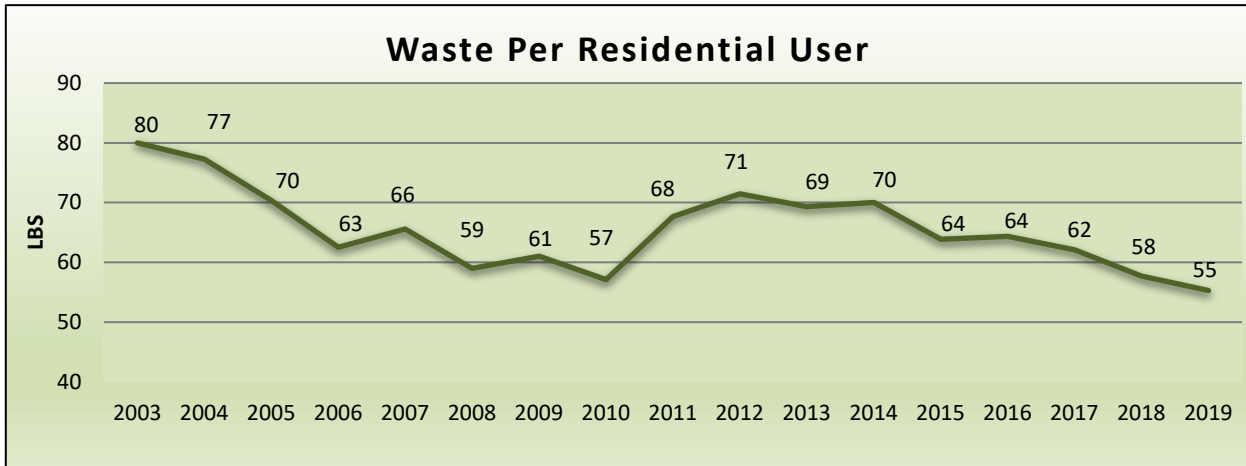
Residential Users

In 2019, 8,413 users brought household-generated material to the HHM facility, 520 more users than the previous year.



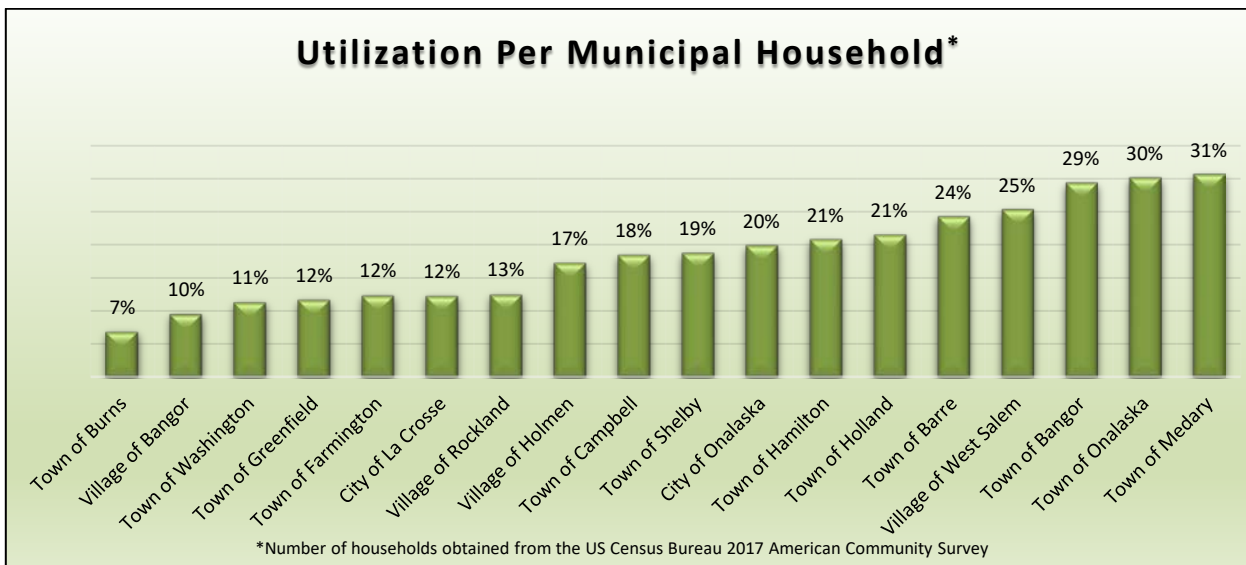
For the past seven years, the average weight of hazardous materials per residential user has been steadily decreasing. This is representative of our system. After the initial start of the program, users were able to clean up stockpiled waste that they had not previously been able to dispose of. The chart below depicts the average

amount of waste by weight brought in by each household user since the program's inception. This data includes all hazardous materials collected including household chemicals and electronics.



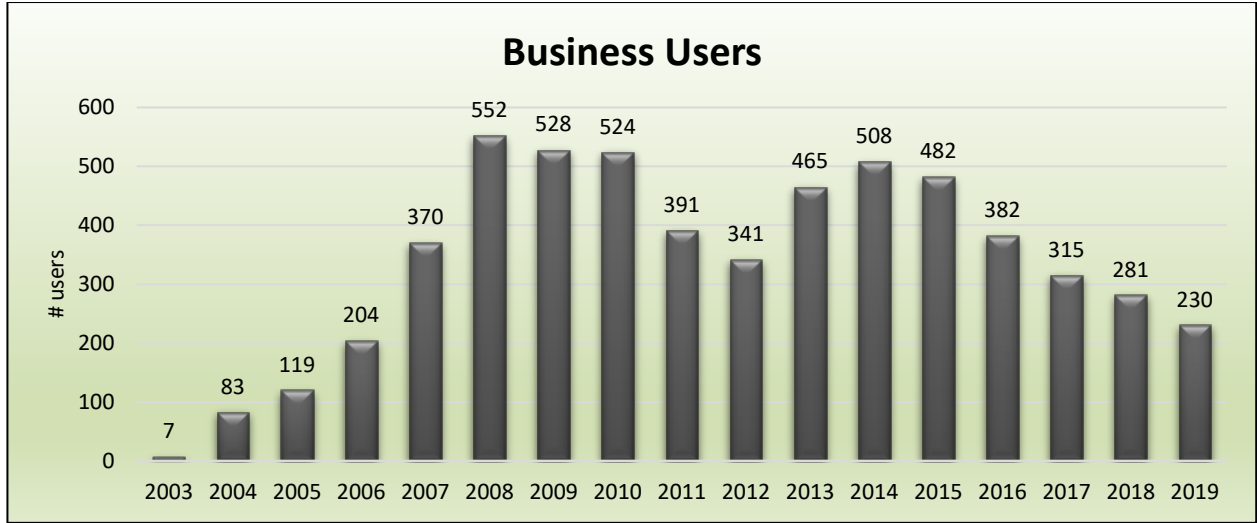
A spike in accepted residential user materials occurred in 2012. This coincided with the statewide electronic waste landfill ban and the HHM program's acceptance of electronic waste. The initial stockpile of electronic waste has since been reduced. In addition, today's electronic devices are significantly lighter than in the past resulting in less weight at the time of disposal.

The following chart shows that in 2019, the program was utilized by residents throughout the county regardless of where they live; however, the level of participation varies among the various municipalities. Overall, 16.5% of La Crosse County's households utilized the program in 2019.



Business Users

The HHM program accepts waste generated by businesses that qualify as very small quantity generators (VSQG's) on a fee for service basis. These entities generate hazardous waste at a rate of less than 220 pounds per month. In 2019, the HHM received waste materials from 230 businesses. The facility has seen a recent decline in the number of businesses utilizing the facility. Revenue received from qualifying VSQGs are an important part of the facility's operations. A marketing strategy has been developed aimed at increasing this important customer base and will be implemented in 2020.



Off-Site Collection Events

In 2019, the HHM program collaborated in eight off-site hazardous waste collection events including four Wisconsin counties (Crawford, Juneau, Trempealeau and Vernon) and three Houston County, Minnesota municipalities (Houston, La Crescent, Spring Grove). The HHM utilized its hazardous waste disposal company, Clean Harbors, to pick up waste directly from the event sites rather than transporting the waste back to the HHM facility. The purpose of this arrangement was to reduce the amount of staff time spent at mobile collection events, address storage limitations at the HHM facility and reduce the overall risk to staff encountered with repeated handling and transportation of hazardous waste.

The following is a summary of 2019 HHM program off-site hazardous waste collection events.

**2019 Off-Site Collection Summary**

Wisconsin Clean Sweep			Houston Co. Minnesota		
Location	Participants	Wt. Collected	Location	Participants	Wt. Collected
Crawford Co.	304	3,273 lbs.	Houston	65	4,257 lbs.
Juneau Co.	175	5,024 lbs.	La Crescent	113	7,149 lbs.
Trempealeau Co.	115	2,731 lbs.	Spring Grove	43	3,283 lbs.
Vernon Co.	336	6,358 lbs.			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>17,386 lbs.</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>14,689 lbs.</b>

## **Public Awareness**

HHM staff believes an important part of their mission is to educate the public regarding household hazardous materials. In 2019, approximately 800 individuals toured the HHM facility. This provided the public an opportunity to observe facility operations and learn more about safe handling and disposal of the household materials that they encounter every day. For the fourth consecutive year, HHM had a presence at the Earth Fair in Myrick Park. During this Earth Day event, staff had the opportunity to pass out information and talk to residents about the program's services. For the third straight year, HHM staff prepared a booth for the Home and Builders Show. This event provides a great opportunity for staff to interact with and provide information to contractors and homeowners on proper disposal of hazardous wastes associated with home construction/remodeling. An area of continued emphasis was the safe handling and transportation of household hazardous materials. Throughout the year, HHM staff responded to over 1,800 inquiries, distributed hundreds of program brochures, contributed content to the County's website and Facebook pages and participated in several media interviews.

## **HHM Program Funding**

A 2007 Intergovernmental Agreement between La Crosse County and the 18 municipalities of the County established funding contributions, in the form of a \$1/capita from each municipality. This was matched by La Crosse County. These contributions provided over half of the program's funding. Using this funding formula, most of the HHM program's services are free of charge to La Crosse County residents. This Intergovernmental Agreement was renewed on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and supports the operation and maintenance of the HHM program by contributing \$1.30 per capita per annum by February 1st of each year. This payment increases at a rate of \$.05/capita each year until 2022, at which time the payment will be \$1.50/capita. Beginning in 2023 and extending through 2027, the payment will increase at a rate of 2% per year. The calculation of the per capita payment is adjusted each year according to population estimates as published by Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Service Center. This agreement allows for secure and stable program funding extending to December 31, 2027.

The HHM program also receives funding through DATCP Clean Sweep Program. In 2019, the program was awarded \$55,000. This is a 5.5% decrease from 2018.

## **Looking ahead**

The Household Hazardous Materials program remains a valuable and necessary service to the people in this area. The program staff strives to continue providing a program that fulfills the original vision of the HHWAP.

Moving forward in 2020, the program will work to strengthen its partnerships with area businesses. We will also continue to provide outreach and education regarding proper disposal and handling of household hazardous materials through face-to-face interactions with our customers. We are working toward expanding our online presence and reach through new marketing campaigns. As always, the HHM staff appreciates feedback from its customers and stakeholders