



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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EPA Hurricane Maria Update for January 30, 2018: Major Milestone Reached in EPA Collection and Disposal of Hazardous Household Waste in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Continuing its Hurricane Maria response efforts, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is collecting on a daily basis thousands of containers of hazardous household materials, orphan containers and e-waste items in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. To date, **more than 225,000 items have been collected**, keeping these hazardous materials out of the environment and protecting people's health.

The EPA, working closely with municipalities, has set up dozens of household hazardous waste collection locations throughout Puerto Rico and the USVI. PSAs, social media, flyers and door-to-door campaigns are in full swing to provide information on drop-off and/or collection locations and curbside pickup. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) videos, [like this one in Spanish](#), have featured EPA staff talking about household hazardous waste collection operations in Puerto Rico and the USVI.

"By keeping massive amounts of household hazardous waste out of local landfills, we are helping protect public health and the environment across Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands," said EPA Regional Administrator Pete Lopez. "Our partnerships with federal agencies and municipalities on this effort have been invaluable to ensuring the success of waste collection operations that are removing these hazards from people's homes and helping protect local communities."

Household hazardous waste includes aerosol cans, household cleaners and chemicals, paint, and electronic items such as computers and televisions. Household hazardous materials also include car and marine batteries, which have become a major concern due to the large volume of batteries being used by residents who are without power. Household hazardous waste should not be thrown out with regular trash as it can contaminate the land, waterways, and groundwater.

Certain types of household hazardous waste have the potential to cause physical injury to sanitation workers, contaminate septic tanks or wastewater treatment systems if poured down drains or toilets. They can also present hazards to children and pets if left around the house.

EPA's household hazardous waste collection efforts to date have included the collection of:

- 87,600 electronics, like televisions and computers
- 500 large drums or tanks
- 1,000 containers from which EPA personnel extracted Freon, a chlorofluorocarbon that has the potential to erode the ozone layer if it leaks into the air

We can take these items:

- ✓ Spray paint

- ✓ Car and marine batteries
- ✓ Household batteries
- ✓ Fluorescent bulbs
- ✓ Paints and paint thinners
- ✓ Household cleaners & solvents
- ✓ Pesticides, weed killer, insect repellents
- ✓ Propane
- ✓ Gasoline
- ✓ Auto fluids
- ✓ TVs & computers
- ✓ Fire extinguishers

We CANNOT take these items:

- × Explosives / Radioactive materials
- × Asbestos
- × Electrical appliances with plugs or batteries
- × Large appliances (air conditioners, refrigerators, stoves, washers & dryers, etc.)
- × Curbside debris (regular household trash, trees, branches)
- × Medical / Infectious waste



EPA personnel collect household hazardous waste for appropriate disposal. Photo courtesy of U.S. EPA.

For questions about EPA's household hazardous waste collection program in Puerto Rico, the public can call EPA toll free at 888-283-7626 during regular business hours. For Spanish speakers, please call EPA's Caribbean Environmental Protection Division at 787-977-5865.

For more information and photos, visit [EPA's Hurricane Maria website](#).