

Hazardous waste center to open June 1

■ Douglas and Sarpy County residents can dispose of certain household products by appointment at the new facility.

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If you live in Douglas or Sarpy County, you'll soon have a place to dispose of old paints, lawn chemicals, motor oil and other hazardous waste.

After considerable delay, the City of Omaha's household hazardous waste facility, called Under the Sink, will officially open June 1.

The center was expected to open last year, but problems with the roof, floor and furnace led to numerous delays.

"There was a combination of issues," City Public Works Director Hank Vieregger said.

The general contractor, Upland Construction Co., was not penalized. The problems were attributable to subcontractors, said Bob Sink, the city's environmental services manager.

The \$1.2 million center has undergone a test period since May 10, with people who have registered at home shows or online for dropoffs. About 20 drop-offs per day have been accepted from those people.

"It's just a shakedown cruise," Sink said of the drop-offs accepted this month.

Appointments will be taken in 15-minute intervals.

Public works administrators said they want the center's

small staff to have time to talk to people about what kind of material they are handling and how old it is. Household hazardous wastes can cause burns and fires, and can produce toxic gases and fumes.

On the other hand, Sink said, if a person has a product categorized as a household hazardous waste, that doesn't mean it should be disposed of immediately.

"If you've got material that can be used, use it," Sink said. "Use it for what it was intended to be used for."

Only Douglas and Sarpy County residents may use the center at this time, although that might change eventually.

The city has set up a shop in the center where unopened containers of paint and other materials will be given away to those who can use them.

Under the Sink

What: Household waste facility at 4001 S. 120th St.

Public hours: Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

How to use: Dropoffs by appointment only. Call 444-7465 beginning Tuesday.

What's acceptable: Batteries, paint, old medicine, fluorescent tubes, lawn and garden chemicals, motor oil, devices containing mercury, other items.

What's not acceptable: Garbage, gasoline, propane tanks, explosives, ammunition, tires, appliances, electronics, smoke detectors, asbestos, radioactive material, waste from businesses.

Cost: Free.