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Provincial program aimed at curbing hoarding;

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Old paint cans, motor oils and pharmaceuticals are among the items helping to turn Ontario homes into wastelands. While residents are doing a good job of recycling waste headed for Blue and Green bin programs, items that shouldn't go in the garbage and require special handling often end up gathering dust in cupboards, drawers and garages. Building regular material drop offs into Ontarians' already successful recycling routines is the goal of a new campaign spearheaded by Stewardship Ontario, the organization responsible for the Blue Box Program Plan.

The campaign, called Orange Drop, takes recycling beyond the driveway by urging Ontario residents to use designated drop off zones for special waste items including pharmaceuticals, cleaners, batteries and other materials. In landfills, besides taking up space, these materials can contaminate the soil and ground water, eventually making it into rivers, lakes and wildlife. Orange Drop builds on the foundation created by the first MHSW (Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste) program, Do What You Can, launched in 2008. The original program implemented an environmentally safe recycling and disposal routine for nine special waste items. Orange Drop adds 13 new items to the list of hazardous and special waste materials designated for collection, recycling and safe disposal. To accommodate the new items the province is utilizing the more than 92 municipal recycling depots and 238 return-to-retail collection counters, as well as including the broad network of Call2Recycle battery collection drop offs as part of the Orange Drop program. There are also many special collection events held throughout communities across Ontario. For certain special waste items like pharmaceuticals, sharps and syringes, it's not just a matter of environmental safety, but also public safety. Orange Drop will work with the more than 2,700 Ontario pharmacies to collect these materials ensuring that consumers have access to dispose of these materials safely. Last year nearly 30,000 tonnes of hazardous and special waste materials were dropped off at recycling depots across the province. This included over 11,000 tonnes of paints, 571 tonnes of batteries, almost 11,000 tonnes of oil filters, and 1,028 tonnes of pressurized containers. While this is significant, there is still much more work to be done. Stewardship Ontario estimates that the 1,232 tonnes of oil containers and 400 tonnes of solvents that were recycled represent only a fraction of what Ontarians actually used. As a result, these materials are making their way to landfills or languishing in homes. "Ontarians have already demonstrated they are willing to recycle these materials," said Lyle Clarke, vice president of operations at Stewardship Ontario. "We need Ontario residents to start thinking about these items the way they do for the Blue or Green Bin programs, recognize what is an Orange Drop recyclable and understand how to dispose of them appropriately." New items accepted in the Orange Drop program include: syringes and sharps, paint brushes, batteries, car batteries, prescriptions, over-the-counter

medicines, oil filters, CFL light bulbs, pesticides, pressurized containers, toxics displaying the "crossbones" symbol and reactives. A complete list of products and locations can be found at www.makethedrop.ca.