

Proper Paint Disposal

Why It Matters

There are two major types of paints, oil-based and water-based. Oil-based paints use petrochemical products as a solvent and are often called enamels, varnishes, shellacs, lacquers, stains and sealers. Water-based paints use water as the solvent and are referred to as latex paints.

All paint contains pigments, solvents and other additives that can be harmful to you and the environment if not handled properly.

- * Lead was commonly added to paint to make it more durable but was banned in 1978. Lead based paint is still found stored in homes today.
- * Mercury was used in about 30% of latex paints as a preservative and pesticide. In 1990, mercury was banned in latex paint used indoors but some exterior paint is still made with mercury and now requires a warning label.



Look For Alternatives

We strongly encourage the reuse of paint by donating it to those that can use it. This keeps paint out of our landfills and is the most earth friendly disposal option. Other alternative include the following.

- ◆ Buy only what you need. Determine the square footage of the area you are painting before you purchase paint.
- ◆ Properly store paint and use it for touch-ups.
- ◆ Give useable paint to community groups, theater groups and others that can use it.
- ◆ Check with your local Habitat ReStore to see if they accept usable paint for remixing and resale.**
- ◆ Fully dry paint in the can. Once solidified, place the can in the garbage with the lid removed.
- ◆ As a last resort you can take it to a Solid Waste District paint collection event.**

**There may be a fee for this service.

For more information on upcoming paint collection events visit www.dkmm.org.

How to Dry Paint

Paint must be solidified prior to being placed in the trash. Once paint is completely dry, the can should be placed in the trash with the lid removed.

When drying paint be sure to work in a well ventilated area away from children and pets.

Adding kitty litter or other absorbent material to the can will speed up drying in any of the following scenarios.

For Small Quantities (less than one gallon)

1. If the amount of paint is less than one-fourth of the container, the paint should dry in the can with the lid removed in a relatively short amount of time. Stirring the paint every few days will speed up drying.
2. If the amount of paint is more than one-fourth of the container, brush the left-over paint on cardboard or newspaper to use it. Allow the empty can to dry with the lid removed.

For Large Quantities (more than one gallon)

1. Pour one-half inch layers of paint into a cardboard box lined with plastic. Allow the paint to dry before the next layer of paint is added.

Paint Handling Tips

1. Always work in a well ventilated area and away from children and pets.
2. Never work near a source of ignition (open flame, cigarettes, etc.).
3. Never mix chemicals such as cleaners, oils, degreasers, etc. with your paint.
4. Never dump paint on the ground or down storm/sewer drains.

For More Information

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