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Help Keep the Environment Clean!



Brush Up
On The
Facts

How To Dispose of Leftover Paint



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Paint Disposal Problems?

Paint is a common product that can become household hazardous waste when it is not completely used. Paint contains chemicals, such as solvents and metals, that can damage the environment and endanger human health if disposed of improperly. Liquid paint should not be poured down the drain, sewer, dumped on the ground or thrown into the trash.

The easiest way to dispose of your leftover paint is to use it!

- ✓ Apply an extra coat.
- ✓ Touch up scrapes and smudges.
- ✓ Paint closet interiors, garage walls, or storage shelves.
- ✓ Use as primer or undercoat.
- ✓ Give usable paint to neighbors, friends, relatives, or local outlets such as community service organizations, theater groups, or recreation departments for their use.

Solidified paint may be thrown away with household garbage.*

Paint refers to a wide range of coating materials that can be divided into two types – oil-based and water-based.

Water-Based

- ◇ Clean up requires water
- ◇ Latex paints.

Oil Based

- ◇ Clean up requires solvents, paint thinner, mineral spirits, or brush cleaner
- ◇ Enamel, varnish, shellacs, lacquers, stains, and sealers



Is My Paint Usable?

Check to see if the paint is in good condition. Stir the paint – if mixes well, it is probably usable. If latex paint has been frozen, brush it on newspaper. If there are no lumps, it can be used.

* Paint containing lead should not be used or placed in trash even if solidified. Paint produced after 1978 will not contain lead, with the exception of some industrial paints. If you are unsure about the age of your paint, do not use it. Save all paint containing lead for a household hazardous waste collection event.

What if I Can't Find An Outlet For My Paint?

If you have unusable paint or if you are unable to find local outlets for usable paint, you can follow the instructions below to dry out paint.

Where? Find an area which is protected from open flame, children, pets and rain, but has adequate air flow. A locked, screen porch is an ideal place, although a well-ventilated garage or shed may be suitable. *When evaporating oil-based paint or varnish, proper ventilation is especially important to prevent solvent fume build-up, which is a fire health hazard.*

How? The simplest way is to remove the lid and allow the liquid (either water or solvents) to evaporate. This works well for small quantities, such as an inch or two in the bottom of the can. Larger quantities of paint take longer to dry out and may require other methods.

Then What? When thoroughly dry, discard the hardened material with your regular trash. Leave the lid off the can so sanitation workers can see that the paint is hardened.

How Long Will This Take? Depending on the type and quantity of paint, the drying process can be lengthy and may take from several days to several months.

Speed The Process...

- Paint leftover paint on cardboard or newspaper.
- Pour a thin layer (about one inch) of paint into a cardboard box lined with plastic. Allow the paint to dry one layer at a time until all of the paint has hardened.
- For paint that has separated and cannot be mixed, pour off the clear liquid on top, leaving the semi-solid paint sludge in the can to dry. The clear liquid can be poured into a cardboard box lined with plastic and mixed with an equal amount of non-flammable absorbent material, such as clay-based kitty litter or sand and allowed to dry.

How Can I Avoid Future Paint Disposal

- Buy only the amount of paint you need. Measure the area to be painted (deduct window and door areas). The average coverage rate is 400-450 square feet per gallon for one-coat coverage, depending on the surface condition and the type of paint used. Request the assistance of hardware or paint store personnel in purchasing the correct amount.
- Use up existing paint before purchasing more.
- Apply another coat to use up leftover paint.
- Store cans of leftover paint lid side down. Be sure to tightly close the lid. The paint will form a seal and prevent hardening or moisture damage. Store paint in dry area, where it will not freeze.

Helpful Hints...

- *Light & medium colors will not show variations in shade when used to touch up old paint jobs. Dark and bright colors may show variations.*
- *Thinners & turpentine can be reused. Let the paint residue settle to the bottom of the container; pour the clear liquid into a new container. Dry out the leftover residue and throw away with household trash. Be sure to mark contents on the new container.*



According to the National Paint and Coatings Association, residual household paint

comprises the largest portion of household waste collected at household hazardous waste collection programs throughout the country. Collected paints are taken to a hazardous waste landfill, consolidated and sent to a fuel-blending facility, or burned in a hazardous waste incinerator. Collection and disposal of paint can be very costly.

Proper disposal of paint products protects our water resources. Because disposal through hazardous waste collection can be very costly for a community, it is important for citizens to look at all available use and disposal options.

For more information on the proper disposal of all household hazardous waste, read the product label or call The City of Greenville at 903-457-3152.



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