

# Household Hazardous Waste



## PAINT DISPOSAL

Paints commonly used in households:

**Water-based:** latex - least harmful, pre-1992 paint may contain mercury;

**Oil-based:** enamel, lacquer, shellac and varnish - contains solvents;

**Hobby or artist:** coloring paints - may contain solvents or heavy metals;

**Aerosols:** spray paints - contain solvents and propellants.

### What You Should Do With Leftover Paints

- Use them up or give them to someone who can.
- Dry unwanted latex paint outdoors, away from children and animals and discard with the household trash in a plastic lined box. Remove paint can lids so the trash removers can see that the cans are empty or the paint is dry. Call your local recycling coordinator to see if the empty cans and lids can be recycled.
- Add kitty litter to completely dry the paint out.
- Unwanted oil-based paint should be brought to your local Household Hazardous Waste collection event.

**Always read the label for safety precautions, even if you are familiar with the product.  
Remember, improper disposal of these products can harm the environment!**

### Store Unusable Paints Properly and Safely Before Disposal

- Keep the product in its original container with the label intact.
- Place leaking containers in larger, leak-proof containers clearly labeled with the contents.
- Store products out of reach of children and pets, away from heat, and away from the house, if possible.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION on household hazardous waste, contact:

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Division of Solid & Hazardous Materials

Bureau of Waste Reduction & Recycling

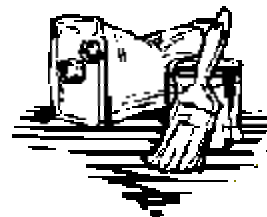
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-7253

Tel: (518) 402-8705

**This information applies only to home-generated wastes. Businesses and organizations must comply with all applicable state and federal hazardous waste regulations.**

### Paint Trivia

Most paint has four components: **resin, solvent, pigment and additives**. To determine the hazardous ingredients of paint, request a Material Safety Data Sheet from the retailer when you buy it.



The **resin** is the main ingredient and forms a coating or film on the surface being painted. This typically non-hazardous component includes linseed, acrylic or other synthetic resins.

The **solvent** keeps the paint in a liquid form until the solvent evaporates after the paint is applied. The solvent in oil-based paint is derived from a petroleum distillate and can include such hazardous ingredients as mineral spirits, toluene and xylene. The solvent in latex paint is water.

**Pigments** provide the color and covering power. The major pigments used presently are titanium oxide, iron oxide, calcium sulfate, clay or silicates. These pigments are relatively nontoxic. Some highly colored pigments may contain heavy metals such as chromium, cadmium or arsenic.

*Paints purchased before 1977 may contain lead in the pigment. Lead, also a heavy metal, is poisonous. Do not use paint purchased prior to 1977. To determine if the painted surfaces in your home contain lead, contact your local health department or a lead paint removal contractor.*

Paint may also have **additives**. Some types of additives include stabilizers that prevent paint deterioration in the can, dryers that assist in the formation of the paint coating, thickeners that aid in application, and preservatives that inhibit the growth of molds. The additives can range in composition, including both hazardous and non-hazardous ingredients.

*Some latex paints contain a mercury-based fungicide preservative. Mercury is a heavy metal that is highly toxic. Paints containing mercury produced since August 1990 had to be labeled exclusively for exterior use.*



As of August 1991, the United States Environmental Protection Agency prohibits mercury in all newly manufactured paints. The National Paint and Coatings Association has voluntarily complied with these guidelines. To determine if your latex paint contains mercury, call the National Pesticide Telecommunication Network at 1-800-858-7378.



## More On... What You Should Do with Leftover Paints

### - For Usable Paints



-Use them up or give them to someone who can. Other groups to contact to see if they need usable latex paint include theater groups, community betterment groups, schools, daycare centers and graffiti removal projects. Before sharing usable latex paint, determine if it contains mercury (pre-1992 paint). If it does, inform your recipient and suggest they use it only for exterior surfaces.

- Your community may sponsor a paint exchange for usable paint. If not, organize a paint exchange between members of local clubs, service organizations or other groups. Inform participants of the paint exchange that latex paint containing mercury should be used only on exterior surfaces. As a general rule, for paint to be usable by someone else, at least 1/3 of a gallon should remain in the original can with a legible label.

### - For Unusable or Frozen Paints

- Never put liquid paint into the trash or pour it down the drain unless instructed to do so by local waste officials. Paint disposed of this way can contaminate our water resources and the environment.

- As a last resort, small amounts of paint can be solidified. Because of the increased health and safety risks involved in solidifying oil-based paints, contact your local city or county officials for other proper disposal methods. Call your local recycling coordinator to see if the empty cans and lids can be recycled.

- Unusable oil based paints should be brought to your local household hazardous waste collection event.

- Dry unwanted latex paint outdoors, away from children and animals and discard with household trash in a plastic lined box. Add kitty litter to make sure there are no residual liquids. Remove paint can lids so trash removers can see that the cans are empty or the paint is dry.

