

# GUIDE TO DISPOSING LATEX PAINT

## Did you know...

...There are two types of paints commonly sold for home use:

**water-based latex paints** and **oil-based paints**.



**OIL-BASED PAINTS**, (as well as wood finishes, shellacs, varnishes, wood protectors, mildew resistant paints, and “preservative” paints) must all be brought to a household hazardous waste drop-off to be properly disposed of.

**LATEX PAINT** (a.k.a. water-based, acrylic, or emulsion paint) is comprised mostly of water and can be disposed of in your household trash as long as it is solidified first.

Latex paint must be dried up before placing paint cans with your regular trash. Please be sure that your paint is completely solidified. Liquid paints can spill during the collection process; paint leaking into trucks and onto roadways poses cleanup challenges.

The best ways to manage latex paint are to:

**Use it up!** **Dry it up!** **Pass it on!**

### Use it up!

Small amounts of paint can be mixed with other colors or bulked together and used as a primer coat or on jobs where the final finish is not critical.

Avoid creating waste at the start, buy only what you need. One gallon of paint will cover between 250 and 350 square feet, depending on the porosity of the surface to be covered. A gallon of paint will cover closer to 250 square feet of surfaces that are more porous.

## Dry it up!

***Place in a well ventilated place, where children and animals won't get into it.***

You have three options:

- 1. Air dry.** Allow paint to dry in cans by removing lid and allowing liquids to evaporate. Paint cans should be less than 1/3 full. This can take several days. If more than 1/3 full, pour some into coffee can, ice cream bucket, or similar container.
- 2. Use a drying agent.** Mix in an equal amount of an absorbent material and allow paint to dry. Use cat litter, sawdust, sand or "waste paint hardeners" found at home improvement centers.
- 3. Pour thin layers (about 1" of paint) into a cardboard box lined with newspaper.** Allow paint to dry one layer at a time until all paint has hardened. When first layer has hardened, pour in another layer. When you've dried out all paint, put box out with your regular trash.

Once paint in cans is thoroughly dry, paint cans may be discarded with your regular trash.

Leave lid off can so waste collector can see paint is hardened. Place cans with lids off next to your regular trash. You may place up to four paint cans out for collection at one time.

## Pass it on:

Donate unopened cans of paint. Religious groups (Call Matthew 25 Ministries to donate paint – 793-6256), community groups, and theater groups will accept unopened cans of paint – especially white paint. Even a neighbor may need extra paint. Also, check your paint store's policy on returning unopened cans of paint.

**Please DO NOT bring latex paint to Butler County's Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off program. Only Oil-based paint will be accepted.**

**DO NOT** dump paint on ground or down storm drains – it will travel directly to surface and/or ground water.

**DO NOT** pour paint down drain. While small amounts of latex paint can safely be washed down drain to a septic system or wastewater treatment plant, this practice should be kept to a minimum. Limit this to brush cleaning and other clean-up.

**DO NOT** throw liquid paint in regular trash. Leaking paint spills out of waste collection vehicles onto city streets making a mess that is difficult to clean up.



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