



Latex Paint Recycling

Latex paint is not considered hazardous waste and is NOT accepted at our Household Hazardous Waste Collection events.

Latex paint is usable if it is less than 10 years old and has not been repeatedly frozen and thawed. If paint will mix when you stir it, it is probably usable. If this is the case check with your Habitat for Humanity ReStore to see if they will accept it for reuse.

How to distinguish latex paint from solvent-based paint:

If possible, read the label. Solvent-based paint labels require mineral spirits or turpentine for cleanup. If cleaning can be done with soap and water, the paint is water-based. If the label is missing or unreadable, determine the paint's solubility in water. A small amount of paint in a jar mixed with water will show whether it is latex or solvent-based. Latex paint readily mixes with water. Solvent-based paint is insoluble in water – the paint and water will separate.

How to dispose of latex paint:

For smaller quantities: Take an absorbent material such as kitty litter, sand, saw-dust, newspaper and add to the paint. Stir paint. The paint will be absorbed by these materials and speed up the drying process.

For larger quantities: Dump paint into an old bucket or trash bag lined cardboard box. Add absorbent material and stir. You may want to add absorbent material first to ease the mixed process. For all methods, to ensure latex paint is dry, push a screwdriver or other tool into the paint. If it does not penetrate the paint is dry. Once the paint is dry it is safe to throw in the trash.

Managing Leftover Latex Paint

If you cannot save, use up, donate or exchange your leftover paint, the following instructions can be followed to dispose of the unwanted LATEX paint properly:

- If the paint has dried, remove the lid and place the container in a plastic trash bag and seal the bag. Then place the sealed bag with your other household trash.
- If the paint is in liquid form allow the leftover latex-based paint to solidify or dry away from children or pets in a well ventilated area.
- One method of drying is to add absorbent material such as shredded newspaper, sand or cat box filler to speed drying. Some paint stores also sell a waste paint hardener. Check your local paint store for availability. Once the paint is hardened or thickened, place in a plastic trash bag and seal. Then include with regular household trash.
- Because of the size and weight, it is recommended that no more than 2 prepared unwanted/unusable paint containers be placed with the trash per collection day.
- Steel paint cans that are clean and empty may be recycled by placing them in your curbside recycling bins without the lid.
- Consumers should buy only the paint they need. Source reduction is the best way to avoid having a paint disposal problem.
- Consumers can store paint so it lasts for years. Leftover paint is not a waste product. When properly stored, paint can last for years until it can be used up. Follow the directions below:
 1. Cover the opening of the can with plastic wrap.
 2. Securely fit the lid on the can so it does not leak.
 3. Store the paint can upside down until it is needed again - the paint will create a seal and stay fresh for years!
- Paint is not meant to be thrown away. Consumers should use it up. Properly stored leftover paint can be used on touch-up jobs and small projects. Also, similar colors of latex paint can be blended for use on jobs that the final finish is not critical.
- Leftover paint can be donated or exchanged. Consumers are encouraged to donate leftover paint to community groups, theater groups, schools, churches or others who need or want it. Consumers also are encouraged to participate in neighbor-to-neighbor or community wide paint exchanges/swaps.