



# 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

- Latex paints are water-based and generally non-hazardous and can be dried out and disposed of in regular household trash.
- Oil-based paints are hazardous and must be properly disposed of at a HHW collection event.
- Use up or donate usable leftover paint. Either type of paint can be donated to reuse organizations such as Habitat for Humanity Restore, friends, neighbors, community centers, places of worship, local theaters, etc, if it is still good, but **DO NOT** drop off paint without first making sure that an organization wants it.
- Below please find instructions on how to dry and safely dispose of **latex water-based paint** with your regular household garbage (**MAKE SURE to do so outside in a location where small children and pets cannot get to it**):
  1. Add equal parts cat litter to latex paint in the can. If you have more than a half a can, you can also pour the paint into a plastic-lined box or trash can. Then pour in cat litter.
  2. Stir the cat litter into the paint until it thickens and will not spill. Allow the mixture to sit for at least a few hours until it is completely dry.
  3. Throw the dried paint in the can in the garbage. Make sure to remove the lid. If you don't have much paint left in the can, you can just remove the lid and let the paint dry out on its own.

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

**NYS Department of Environmental Conservation**

Division of Materials Management

Bureau of Solid Waste Management

625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-7260

Tel: (518) 402-8678



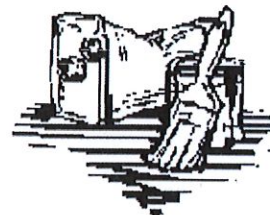
**Always read the label for safety precautions, even if you are familiar with the product. Remember, improper disposal of these products can harm the environment!**

## Facts about Paint

---

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.





## **ALWAYS CONSULT THE PRODUCT LABEL**

---

Labels provide information about proper use and alert you if the product is potentially hazardous.

**Look for:**

- ✓ Signal words -  
**DANGER, POISON, WARNING or CAUTION.**
  
- ✓ Statements of hazards -  
**“Flammable,” “Vapor harmful,” “Harmful or fatal if swallowed.”**
  
- ✓ Precautionary statements -  
**“Keep out of reach of children,” “Use only in well-ventilated areas,” “Do not mix with chlorine-type bleaches or other chemicals.”**

### Store Household Hazardous Waste 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.
- Store liquid flammables in their original containers or UL-approved metal safety cans, available from hardware stores.
- Reduce disposal problems by using smaller amounts of hazardous substances, or by substituting less hazardous substances where possible.

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

**NYS Department of Environmental Conservation**

Division of Materials Management

Bureau of Solid Waste Management

625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-7260

Tel: (518) 402-8678

**Note: The information on this card applies only to home-generated wastes. Businesses and organizations must comply with all applicable state and federal hazardous waste regulations.**