

Recycling and Disposal of Household Paint

Latex Paint

Latex paint is a household hazardous waste. Latex paint is commonly called "water based paint" however; it includes such resins as acrylics, vinyls, and epoxies. It is also made up of solvents, pigments, and additives. Latex paint can be easily cleaned up with soap and water and is less detrimental to our environment than oil-based paints because it contains fewer hazardous materials. However, if this paint is poured down the drain, in a storm sewer, or disposed in regular trash pick up, it can pose a serious environmental problem.

Frequently when a painting job is finished, you find you have paint left over. Give the left over paint to friends, churches, community service organizations, etc. If you find you are unable to donate the paint, find out if your community accepts paint in a household hazardous waste collection program. This is the safe way to dispose of unused paint.

Oil Based Paint

A study at John Hopkins University found 300 toxic chemicals and 150 carcinogens may be present in oil-based paint. Oil based paint is a hazardous waste. If oil-based paint is thrown into the trash and ends up in a sanitary landfill, there is a potential health hazard of the chemicals seeping into the groundwater and being consumed by people or animals. In addition, since oil-based paint is flammable, refuse workers may be injured and equipment may be damaged during trash collection.

Washington Military Department,
Emergency Management Division, 2002