

# GOT LEFTOVER PAINT?

## Follow The "5 Point" Program for Leftover Paint

Do your part to help manage our world's natural resources better. Follow the steps listed below and you will be improving the environment by following the 3R's . . . **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.**



### 1 BUY THE CORRECT AMOUNT OF PAINT FOR THE PROJECT

Be a wise consumer and buy only what you need. Check with your local paint dealer for instructions on how to determine the correct volume of paint required for your project. When you purchase the right volume of paint, it eliminates the need to store or dispose/recycle paint when the project is finished, and it might even save you money. When your painting project is complete, take a look in the can. If there is only a small quantity of paint left, use it up. Paint out the last inch-or-two of paint in the bottom of the can.

### 2 STORE PAINT PROPERLY TO KEEP IT FRESH

If your project is complete and you still have a fair amount of paint leftover, be sure to correctly store the paint. Proper paint storage will eliminate safety concerns and keep your paint fresh for touch-ups or future projects. For best results, cover the opening of the paint can with plastic wrap and securely seal the lid. When you are sure the lid is leak-proof, turn the can upside down and store it in a place with a moderate room temperature to avoid freezing. Be sure to choose a safe location that is out of the reach of children and pets.

### 3 USE UP LEFTOVER PAINT

Now that you have safely stored your leftover paint, don't forget about it. Leftover paint can be used for touch-ups or smaller projects and lighter colors can be taken back to a paint retailer and be retinted for another paint project. Record the room name on the lid for future touch ups. You can blend and mix smaller quantities of latex paint to use as a base coat on larger jobs. Perhaps, you know a neighbor or relative who could use your leftover paint; now, that's being environmentally friendly!

### 4 REUSE OR RECYCLE

If you can't make use of the paint yourself, donate your useable leftover paint to a worthwhile community association, theatre company, church group or other local organizations that may be in need of good paint. Perhaps, your community offers a paint exchange event or a special paint collection program. Many communities collect paint for reuse, recycling or as a last resort, proper disposal through local Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection programs. Check the "Earth 911" Paint Wise web portal at [www.Paint.Earth911.org](http://www.Paint.Earth911.org) or call 1-800-clean-up, to learn about paint reuse, recycling and HHW collection programs that are available in your community.

### 5 DISPOSE OF THE PAINT PROPERLY

If there is not a leftover paint collection program available in your area, you may need to dispose of leftover latex paint yourself. Air-drying of liquid alkyd or oil based paint is not considered safe. In regions that allow it, let your latex paint air dry in a safe location away from children and pets. A small amount of paint, less than ½ inch, in the bottom of a paint can is easily dried out by leaving the lid off. Once the paint is hard, discard the paint can with the lid off, preferably in a metal recycling program. If metal recycling is not available or the paint container is plastic, and plastic recycling is not available, dispose of the container in the garbage. Larger volumes of latex paint can be dried in a box with absorbent material such as shredded paper or kitty litter. Recycle the empty can with the lid off and dispose of the dried out latex paint as garbage. If the paint in the can is solidified all the way through, it may be disposed of as garbage with the lid off to prevent the build up of pressure in the can.

For further information on proper paint disposal, contact NPCA at 202-462-6272 or go to [www.paint.org/pubs/leftover\\_paint.pdf](http://www.paint.org/pubs/leftover_paint.pdf). Go to <http://earth911.org/recycling/paint-recycling/> and [www.recycle-steel.org](http://www.recycle-steel.org) to locate paint and container recycling, as well as household hazardous waste programs in your community.

National Paint and Coatings Association 1500 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005



## Disposal of Latex Paint

Liquid wastes are restricted from municipal solid waste landfills — never throw away leftover liquid paints in your trash.



### Disposal Steps

1. Unused latex paint should be poured into an absorbent material such as a cat box filler, shredded newspaper or sawdust.
2. Let it dry completely and dispose of the dried material in your regular trash.
3. In areas where recycling programs exist, save the dry, empty containers with the lids off for a steel or plastic can recycling program. Small amounts of dried residue will not hinder can recycling.
4. Wash your paint brushes and painting tools in the sink. Never clean your paint brushes near a storm sewer drain.

## Disposal of Solvent-Based Paint

Solvent-based or alkyd paints require special disposal practices. Solvent-based paints are ignitable and present particular hazards. These products should not be emptied into storm sewers, household drains (especially if you have a septic tank) or on the ground.

### Disposal Steps

1. Save solvent-based paints for a household hazardous waste collection program or contact your local/state government environmental protection agency for guidance on reuse or disposal of unwanted solvent-based paint products.
2. In areas where recycling programs exist, save the dry, empty containers with the lids off for a can recycling program. Small amounts of dried residue will not hinder can recycling.
3. Clean paint brushes and painting tools with paint thinner or turpentine.

## Reusing Paint Thinners, Turpentine, Mineral Spirits and Solvents

Paint thinners, turpentine, mineral spirits and solvents can be reused. These products, like solvent-based or alkyd paints, should not be emptied into storm sewers, household drains (especially if you have a septic tank) or on the ground. You can reuse these types of products.

### Reuse Steps

1. Put used turpentine or brush cleaners in a closed container and leave it in a safe place until the paint particles settle to the bottom.
2. Pour off the clear liquid into an empty, clean container which has a lid for reuse.
3. Add an absorbent material such as a cat box filler, shredded newspaper or sawdust to the remaining residue.
4. Let this residue dry completely before disposing of it in your regular trash.
5. In areas where recycling programs exist, save the dry, empty containers with the lids off for a steel can recycling program. Small amounts of dried residue will not hinder steel can recycling.

## Recycling Paint and Aerosol Containers

Paint and aerosol containers that are composed of high-grade steel can be recycled in a steel can recycling program. Paint containers made of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET resin SPI code 1) and High Density Polyethylene (HDPE resin SPI code 2) plastic are also recyclable in many communities. Check with your local/state government to determine whether steel and other materials may be recycled in your community.

### Recycling Steps

1. To recycle paint containers, make sure they are empty and dry. A thin layer of dried paint on the bottom and sides of the can is usually acceptable.
2. In order to recycle paint can lids, just remove them from the container.
3. To recycle empty aerosols, do not puncture, crush or incinerate the can. You do not have to remove the nozzle of the spray cans for recycling, but do remove the aerosol caps, which are generally made of plastic.