

## HOW TO MANAGE PAINT RELATED WASTE

If possible, recycle or dispose of your paint related waste at the local transfer station or Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection site. Otherwise, please follow these tips:

### Latex Paint Disposal

Latex paint is not hazardous and when dried, can be disposed of with the regular trash.

- Pour the paint into an absorbent material such as shredded newspaper or kitty litter.
- Allow it to completely dry.
- Dispose of the dried paint in the trash.
- In areas where recycling programs exist, recycle the empty, dry container.

### Oil-based Paint Disposal

Oil-based paint, stains and varnishes are hazardous and should not be disposed of in the regular trash.

- Take it to a HHW collection if available.
- If you need to dispose of oil-based paint and a HHW collection is not available in your area, call 271-2047 for information on disposal options.
- In areas where recycling programs exist, recycle the empty, dry container.

### Paint Thinner, Turpentine and Mineral Spirits

Let the solids settle, and pour off the clear liquid. Use for the next project. Add cat litter, sawdust or shredded newspaper to the solid residue; dry completely, then dispose of with the household trash.

For More Information about this Subject,  
Call the  
N.H. Department Of Environmental  
Services (DES) at (603) 271-2900  
or (603) 271-2047

or

Visit our Household Hazardous Waste  
Website at: [www.des.state.nh.us/hhw](http://www.des.state.nh.us/hhw)

or

e-mail: [hhw@des.state.nh.us](mailto:hhw@des.state.nh.us)



N.H. Department of Environmental Services  
Waste Management Division  
Household Hazardous Waste Program  
29 Hazen Drive  
Concord, NH 03301

## "Green" PAINTING TIPS

### A Guide to the Environmentally Friendly Purchase, Use and Disposal of Paint Products



## PAINT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**P**aints, stains and varnishes can add color to your home, spruce up a drab room or transform an old piece of furniture into a beautiful work of art. But, did you know that paint and paint-related products might be harmful to the environment when they are disposed of improperly?

Paint and paint related products contribute to **air pollution** when their vapors are released into the atmosphere. If they are poured down the drain or put into a landfill, they can **destroy your septic system or pollute groundwater**. Never throw liquid paint products into the trash.

Paint products can be **hazardous to your health**. They can irritate your eyes and skin, and may be harmful if inhaled. Always follow the directions on the label and use products properly.



## TYPES OF PAINT PRODUCTS

**Latex paints** are water-based and usually less harmful to the environment than oil-based paints. They clean up with soap and water.

**Oil-based paints, stains and varnishes** contain solvents that don't mix with water. They must be cleaned with paint thinner or appropriate solvents. These products are flammable and present particular waste management problems. Never dump these products into storm drains, down the sink, into sewers, or onto the ground.

**Paint thinner, turpentine and mineral spirits** are generally used to thin oil-based paints and stains or to clean up the residues left behind. The leftover liquids are household hazardous waste; they are flammable and should never be dumped into the environment.



## TIPS TO REDUCE PAINT-RELATED WASTE

An average of two gallons of household paint is sold for each person in the United States each year. Much of the paint that is left over needlessly ends up in our nation's landfills and incinerators. You can help reduce the amount of waste paint that ends up in the environment by following these 6 easy steps.

1. **Buy only what you need.** Measure the area you are painting. A typical gallon of paint covers about 400 square feet.
2. **Purchase the right type of paint.** Check the label to make sure it is suited for your project (for example, plaster, wood, metal or high temperature).
3. **Use latex paint whenever possible.** It is less harmful to the environment than oil based paint.
4. **Use it up.** Use leftovers on smaller projects or store properly for later use.
5. **Donate it.** Give extra paint to a friend, charity, or your municipal swap shop.
6. **Keep it.** Store small amounts in a tightly sealed jar or can for later use. For a tight seal, store the closed can upside down. Keep the can from freezing. Make sure you label it with the name brand and color, date when stored, and the project it was used on.