GET RID OF IT:
A painter's guide to storage, disposal and clean-up of paint wastes

Painters should store a variety of materials, including paints, wearables, thinners, strippers, brush cleaners and other solvents, water, glues, sealants, wood preservatives and aerosol spray paints.

It is illegal to deposit any of these materials into storm drains. The same is true for sinks, bathtubs, or disposal on the ground. Penalties for improper disposal are severe and include fines, loss of license, and responsibility for clean-up costs. By disposing of hazardous paint waste properly through your local Hazardous Waste Collection Program, you can help protect our drinking water and the aquatic life in our creeks and the Bay.

So, how can painters manage hazardous paint wastes easily and economically?

Avoid Paint Disposal
- For small follower amounts, consider applying an additional coat or combining paint for use at a later date.
- For larger follower amounts, arrange for the distributor or manufacturer to take back unused or unwanted paint, or donate paint to schools, church, churches or local causes.
- Scrape containers with a plastic scraper to remove the unused paint. You can salvage up to 90% of your paint this way.

Recycle and Reuse
- Recycle usable latex paint through your local Hazardous Waste Collection Program (see below for more).
- Keep latex and oil-based paint separate. Mixing these together makes recycling impossible.
- For small follower amounts, consider applying an additional coat or combining paint for use at a later date.
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Buy Smart
- Estimate paint needs carefully. Buy and store only what you think will be used.
- Use latex paints rather than oil-base paints whenever possible. Oil-base paints release harmful fumes, require solvents for cleanup, and cannot be recycled.
- For smaller amounts, consider purchasing paint in small quantities.
- For larger amounts, arrange for the distributor or manufacturer to take back unused or unwanted paint, or donate the paint to local schools, churches, or other causes.
- Scrape containers with a plastic scraper to remove the unused paint. You can salvage up to 90% of your paint this way.

Store Safely
- Care and store materials tightly to avoid contamination, reduce evaporation and increase product life.
- Store all painting-related products in a covered area away from dust, rain, and storm drains, both in shop and at the site. Keep absorbent pads on hand to catch any spilled material and block sewers or storm drains.
- Remove containers in vehicles to avoid spills during transportation.

Use Wisely
- When working, always use tarp and drop cloths to prevent drips and spills and never use cleaning products that may be washed off into the storm drain.
- Black storm drains with top hats, filters, or sand bags during water or non-paint spraying of building materials to prevent paint chips from entering storm drains and waterways.

Clean-up with Care
- Never clean equipment in gutter, streets, or storm drains. It's illegal to dispose of any material except paint water into the storm drain.
- Paint out brushes and rollers as much as possible before cleaning, and:
  - For Latex Paint, Always clean equipment in a sink connected to the sanitary sewer.
  - For Oil Paint, Always use cleaning solvents/thinners and look for the least toxic products available.

Getting Rid of Paint Wastes

Bring your Local Hazardous Waste Collection Program
- Landfills
- Oil-based paints, airbrushes, varnishes
- Containers which are not empty*
- Spraying compounds (used)
- Contaminated sandblasting waste*
- Contaminated paint chips* (lead, mercury, etc.)
- Absorbents made to clean up spills from paint*

Call Cherry Hazardous Materials Programs at (510) 631-2885 for additional guidance.

Appropriate for Trash Collection
- Dry brushes, rollers and cans
- Dry paint (brown air-dry oil-based paint)
- Dry erase containers (0 gallons in size or less with no hazardous contents)

Numbers to Know

Hazardous Waste Collection Programs
For local disposal options, painters (businesses and residents) should call:
- East and West County (800) 750-4966
- Crystal City (669) 694-1341
- Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Programs (510) 646-2286
- Contra Costa County Clean Water Program (storm drain) (800) 599-1762
- California State Department of Toxic (510) 590-7171
- Pollution Control Center (800) 676-4766
- CALL OSHA (510) 433-5577

Hazardous Waste Collection Programs for Small Business
- California Lead Collection Program (800) 999-LEAD
- Lead Certification and Training (800) 699-2153

Lead Hazards
Lead-based paint was commonly used in residential homes until 1978. An estimated 157 million homes in the U.S. were painted with lead-based paints. Solving or targeting these problems can be very challenging and requires a multi-faceted approach. Only certified contractors should handle material painted with lead-based paint.

For more information, call the following California Department of Health Services programs:
- Lead Certification and Training (800) 999-LEAD
- Lead Certification Program (800) 699-2153
- Occupational Lead in Construction (510) 590-3448