

## Got leftover paint?

Here are some easy ways to reduce the amount of leftover paint you generate:

- **Buy only what you need**

Retailers can help you calculate the right amount of paint for your project. Typically, one gallon of paint will provide one coat for 300 square feet.

- **Use it up**

Use leftover paint for an extra coat, touch-ups or a base coat on another project.

- **Give it away**

Ask friends, relatives, neighbors, churches, theatrical groups, schools, recreation departments or community organizations if they can use your leftover paint. Only give away paint that is in good condition and in its original container with an intact label.

- **Save it for a future use**

If properly stored, paint stays good for a long time. To prevent paint from drying out, cover the opening with kitchen plastic wrap, then replace the lid securely. Finally, store the paint can upside down in an area where it can't freeze.



Solid Waste Management  
Household Hazardous Waste  
3510 S. Mullen St.  
Tacoma, WA 98409  
(253) 591-5418

[www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste)

# Proper paint disposal

Latex and oil-based paint disposal  
minimizing paint waste



City of Tacoma  
Solid Waste Management

# Are you planning a painting project?

*Are old cans of paint taking up space in your garage?*

*Every year, countless gallons of paint left over from do-it-yourself projects are just thrown away. When improperly disposed, paint can pollute our surface water and groundwater, threatening human health and wildlife.*

*Save money and the environment! Follow these tips to minimize and safely get rid of your leftover paint.*



## Oil-based paint

### What is oil-based paint?

Oil-based paints are made with oil and can be identified by checking the label. Oil-based paints can be described as “alkyd” or “stain,” and will be identified as “flammable” or “combustible” as part of a warning label. Stain, paint thinner, roofing tars and sealers are also classified as oil-based products. Oil-based paint may be best for tasks such as priming bare wood.

### How to safely get rid of oil-based paint

- Unlike latex paint, oil-based paint should not be dried out or solidified. These wastes can be considered flammable or combustible whether wet or dry.
- Empty paint cans may be placed in the garbage, with the lids off.
- Never put flammable products, such as oil-based paint or thinner, down any drain or into the garbage.
- Take leftover oil-based paint or oil-based products to the City of Tacoma Household Hazardous Waste Facility, located at the Tacoma Landfill.

**Household Hazardous Waste Facility**  
3510 S. Mullen St.  
(253) 591-5418  
8 a.m. to 6 p.m., every day

## Latex paint

### What is latex paint?

Latex paint is water-based and can usually be identified by the word “latex” on the label. If “latex” isn’t there, look for directions to clean up with or thin with water. Latex paint will work for most home painting projects. It is less toxic than oil-based paint, which contains flammable and toxic solvents.

### How to safely get rid of latex paint

Because latex paint is relatively non-toxic, you can place empty and solidified paint cans in the garbage, with the lids off. It is important to solidify latex paint before placing it in the garbage because it can cause problems during collection or spill on the street. Tacoma’s Household Hazardous Waste Facility does not accept latex paint. The Tacoma Landfill may not accept latex paint that isn’t solidified.

### Ways to solidify latex paint

- If you have an inch or less of paint left in the can, simply remove the lid and let the paint dry out. Protect it from freezing and rain as well as curious children and animals. This method is most effective in warmer months.
- If you have more than an inch of paint left in a can, try one of these two methods:
  1. Mix latex paint with an equal amount of cat litter, stir and allow to harden.
  2. Mix latex paint with cement, stir and allow to harden. Approximately 10 pounds of cement will solidify one gallon of latex paint. Use a suitably-sized container for mixing.

After latex paint has hardened or solidified, place the cans in the garbage with the lids off.