

Household Paint Disposal Guide

Tips for Handling Unwanted Paint

Paint and related products such as paint thinners and solvents have different disposal methods based on the chemical formula of the product. Proper handling and disposal protects human health and the environment.



LATEX PAINT

- Latex paint is also referred to as water-based, acrylic, or emulsion paint. It is comprised mostly of water and is **not** considered a hazardous waste. It can be safely disposed of in your household trash as long as it is **solidified first**.
- To determine if your paint is latex, look at the label and find the 'Cleanup Instructions'. For latex paint, you will be instructed to clean your brushes with 'detergent and water' or 'soap and water'. If you are instructed to use a solvent, like mineral spirits, to clean your brushes or if the words 'alkyd' or 'combustible' are on the label, the paint is not latex based and should be disposed through household hazardous waste collection.
- Latex paint is **not** accepted at the household hazardous waste event -- handling latex paint at home will keep program costs within budget.

HOW TO SOLIDIFY LATEX (WATER-BASED) PAINT

- **Air dry.** Remove the lid and allow the liquid to evaporate. This works well for small quantities of paint (an inch or two in the bottom of the can), and can take several days.
- **Use a drying agent.** Mix an equal amount of an absorbent material into the can and allow the paint to dry. Use cat litter, sawdust, plaster of Paris, Oil-dri, or "waste paint hardeners" found at home improvement centers as absorbent material. The paint could dry quickly, depending on how much drying agent you include in the can.
- **Pour thin layers** (about 1" of paint) into a cardboard box lined with plastic. Allow the paint to dry one layer at a time until all paint has hardened. Once the paint is thoroughly dry, place it in a regular trash bag and put it out for trash collection.

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LATEX PAINT DISPOSAL

**DRY IT UP
THROW IT OUT**

Water-base paint is not hazardous and should be disposed of in the trash.



PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY

DO NOT

dump the paint on the ground or down storm drains where it will travel directly to surface and/or ground water.

DO NOT

pour paint down the drain. Keep brush and paint tool washing to a minimum by wiping off excess paint with a disposal rag before clean up.

DO NOT

throw liquid paint in the regular trash. It is illegal and leaking paint spills out of waste collection vehicles onto streets making an unsightly mess that is very difficult to clean up.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Town of Bow Recycling
Committee Website

[https://
www.bownh.gov/340/
Annual-Household-
Hazardous-Waste-Collect](https://www.bownh.gov/340/Annual-Household-Hazardous-Waste-Collect)

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