

PROPER DISPOSAL PAINT

A Guide to doing it right in Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

Paint is Hazardous?

Paint is a common household product and it is easy to accumulate quantities of waste paint. This makes it one of the most common types of household hazardous waste. There are two types of paint, oil-based and latex. Latex paints are generally less hazardous than oil-based. Both types contain four parts: a resin, solvent, pigments, and additives, each of which may contain hazardous components.

What shouldn't I do with my unwanted/old Paint?

Don't pour paint down the drain. Most wastewater treatment plants are not equipped to process hazardous materials. In addition to potential problems at the treatment plant, these materials are released directly into the environment.

Don't put liquid paint into your trash. Solidify it first (see options below). Liquid paint can mix with other materials and be released into the environment.

What do I do with my unwanted/old Paint?

- **Use it.** If paint will mix when stirred, it is probably useable. Oil-based paint can be good for up to 15 years and latex up to ten, provided it hasn't been repeatedly frozen.
- **Buy only what you need.** On a per ounce basis, quarts are more expensive than gallons. However, if you only need a quart, don't buy a gallon that you will probably never use and need to dispose of down the road.

- **Use a special collection.** There are many special household hazardous waste collections in our region that accept paint. Many of these also accept electronics and other hazardous materials. Fees apply. Contact us for the most recent list.
- **Donate it.** Quantities of good usable paint may be of interest to organizations (such as play houses or Habitat for Humanity) and schools for theatrical productions and other activities.
- **Solidify it.** Pour your old paint onto kitty litter or another absorbent material. Once dry, the paint can be placed in your trash. If the can is metal, it can be placed in your recycling bin. Plastic cans belong in the trash.
- **Solidify it with paint hardeners.** This product comes in a small packet that when mixed with waste paint, solidifies the paint in about 20 minutes. Paint hardeners are available through many hardware and paint stores. Once the paint is solidified, you can toss it into the trash. Make sure the lid is kept off of the can so that your trash hauler can see no liquid is present.

<https://lawrencecountypa.gov/departments/recycling-and-solid-waste>

www.mercercountypa.gov/recycling

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