

## **6. DISPOSE OF PAINT PROPERLY**

Disposing of paint properly keeps hazardous products out of our groundwater and streams. Follow these steps to properly dispose of paint:

### ***For small amounts of latex paint***

If you have one inch or less of leftover latex, dry it out and discard the can. Dry out latex paint by opening the can and letting the liquid evaporate outdoors, away from children and pets. Dispose of the paint can (with the lid off) in the garbage. (Empty paint cans can go in the garbage too. Just leave the lids off. Liquids are not allowed in the trash.)

### ***For larger amounts of latex paint***

To dispose of latex paint cans containing more than one inch of paint, take the paint to your local household hazardous waste collection facility.

### ***For oil-based paint and other paint products such as turpentine***

Do not dry up oil-based paint. Take it along with your other paint products (such as turpentine) to your local household hazardous waste collection facility.

## **City of Lawrence/Douglas County**

### **Household Hazardous Waste Facility**

The facility is accepting hazardous waste from Douglas County households by appointment throughout the year. Appointment hours include weekday and evening hours.

Call 832-3030 to schedule a drop-off appointment for your unwanted paints and paint related materials.

Business, contractor or commercial paint can be accepted through the Small Quantity Generator Program. Call 832-3030 for details about this program.

## **How to tell if your paint is Latex or Solvent-based**

There are two easy ways to tell the difference.

1. Read the label: For solvent-based paint, you will often see the words “alkyd” or “oil-based” on the label. Clean-up instructions on the label are also a good way to tell whether a product is solvent-based. If the label says to use mineral spirits or turpentine to clean your brush or roller, then the product is solvent-based.

If clean-up instructions say you can clean your brush or roller with soap and water, it is typically latex paint.

2. See if the paint dissolves in water: Put a small amount of the paint in a jar or cap and add water. If it's latex paint, it will readily mix with water. Since it is water-based, it will become thinned as water is added.

If it's solvent-based paint, it won't dissolve in water. The paint and water will separate like

**Lead Paint:** Exposure to lead can cause serious health problems, especially for children and pregnant women. It's important to follow proper procedures to keep yourself and your family safe when removing lead-based paint. Before beginning work, learn about the hazards of lead-based.

To find out more about how to protect children from lead poisoning, contact the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-LEAD-FYI** (1-800-532-3394).

For other information on the hazards of lead, call **1-800-424-LEAD**.

\*\* This brochure was adapted from King County Solid Waste Division's "Six Steps for a Successful Paint Project" web page.

# **Paint Lawrence Green**

Six steps to a successful  
paint project!



LAWRENCE  
WASTE  
REDUCTION  
& RECYCLING



[www.LawrenceRecycles.org](http://www.LawrenceRecycles.org)

## *Six steps for a successful paint project!*

### 1. BUY THE RIGHT AMOUNT

Know how much paint you need before you go to the paint store. Painting projects require about one gallon of paint to cover 400 square feet of smooth surface. You can save money and avoid waste by getting the right amount of paint for your project.

### 2. CHOOSE THE RIGHT PAINT

Latex paint is a better choice than oil-based paint for most projects. Oil-based paint and thinner contain flammable and toxic solvents. Water-based (latex) paint will work for most home painting tasks. It is thinned with water instead of a toxic solvent.

Oil-based paint may be best for some tasks (like priming bare wood). But water-based products continue to improve, and every year more water-based products can be found on store shelves. For example, water-based stains are gaining popularity. Ask staff at your local paint or hardware store about these products.

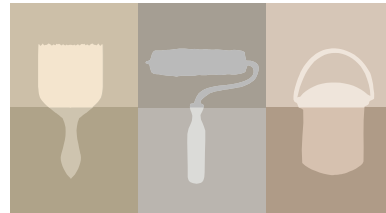
#### ***The right color without wasting paint***

Do you buy quart after quart of paint trying to find the perfect shade? Paint retailers can help you find the right shade without wasting lots of paint -- and money. For instance, your retailer may be able to alter just one gallon of paint until it's the shade you want.

Many paint stores have computers that will match a paint color to a sample color you provide.

### 3. PAINT SAFELY

During your project be sure to provide adequate ventilation by opening windows and doors and using a fan. Wear rubber gloves so you won't absorb solvents through your skin. A dust mask will not protect you from exposure to oil-based paints and solvents. If you frequently use oil-based products, a respirator is a good health investment.



#### ***Cleaning up***

Oil-based paint: To clean brushes, first brush excess paint onto newspaper or cardboard, let it dry, then put in the garbage. Use thinner to finish cleaning brushes. Never put flammable products such as oil-based paint or thinner down any drain or into the garbage!

Water-based (latex) paint: When you've finished your paint project, brush excess paint onto newspaper or cardboard. Let the newspaper or cardboard dry out and throw it into the garbage. Wash brushes and rollers in inside drains with soap and water. Never clean them on the lawn or street, since the paint can end up in groundwater or a stream.

#### ***Storing paint***

If you store paint for future projects, do it properly. Make sure the lid is on securely and store the paint can upside down. The paint will create a tight seal around the lid, keeping the paint fresh until you need it for another project.

### 4. USE UP ALL THE PAINT

The best way to save money and avoid waste is by only buying as much paint as you need to complete a project. If you find that you have some paint left over, instead of storing it or disposing of it:

- Apply a second coat or use for touch-up.
- Stencil or sponge-paint walls or furniture.
- Mix latex paint together to use as a base coat (mix interior with interior; exterior with exterior).
- Give it away. Check with neighbors, friends, theater groups and other community organizations to see if they would like free paint.
- Paint a fence, shed or your doghouse.

If you still have paint you can't use, don't throw it away! Paint poured on the ground, into storm drains or put in the trash could end up in groundwater and streams. Recycling leftover paint is the safest option.

### 5. RECYCLE LEFTOVER PAINT

Recycle household latex paint at the City of Lawrence/Douglas County household hazardous waste collection facility. Please call 832-3030 to schedule a drop-off appointment.

Don't forget to recycle your paint thinner too. You can also save money and prevent waste by recycling paint thinner. To recycle thinner, store it in a closed jar until particles settle. Strain the clear liquid through a coffee filter and reuse. Take the remaining paint sludge and any unusable thinner to a household hazardous waste collection site. Never put flammable products such as oil-based paint or thinner down any drain or into the garbage!