
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



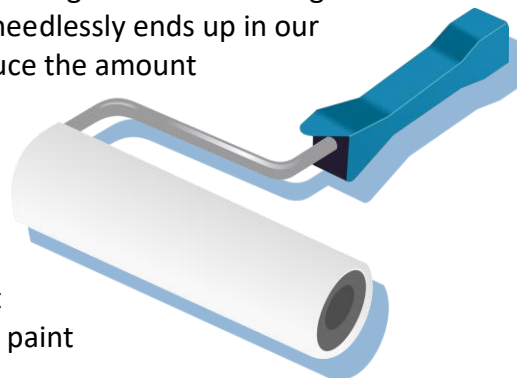
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Pollution Prevention Tips for Paint

It is expected that demand for paint in the United States will grow to 1.4 billion gallons in 2019. That's a lot of paint! Much of the paint that is left over needlessly ends up in our nation's landfills and incinerators. But you can help reduce the amount of paint in our landfills by following these eight steps.



1. **Buy only the paint you need.**

First, always buy only what you need. That way, you reduce the chance of having paint left over in the first place. There are numerous paint calculators available online, or consult with your paint supplier.

2. **Use a "Greener" paint.**

When possible select water-based latex paints, they emit fewer chemicals and lower levels of chemical vapors. Also they usually clean up with soap and water, not toxic paint thinners. Using alternative paint made from lime, milk-protein, clay and earth-based pigments help keep you and environment healthy.

3. **Store paint so it lasts.**

Did you know that when paint is properly stored, it can last for years? Just cover the opening with plastic wrap and replace the lid; make sure the lid fits securely so the paint doesn't leak. Then (here's the key step), store the paint can upside down. The paint will create a tight seal around the lid, keeping the paint fresh until you need it again. Also, make sure you store the paint where it won't freeze over the winter.

4. **Use up all of your paint.**

Now that you know how to keep your leftover paint fresh for years, don't forget about it. Use it up. Leftover paint can be used on touch-up jobs and smaller projects. You can also blend and mix smaller quantities of similar colors of latex paint to use on larger jobs, or as a primer for jobs where the final finish is not critical. Always make sure you read and follow all label instructions when applying paint.

5. **Recycle the empty paint can.**

Once you've used up the paint, see if your community recycles empty steel paint cans. The skin of paint on the inside must be dry for the can to be recyclable. Remember, each paint can you recycle is one less that is disposed of. In some areas, plastic paint pails and containers may also be recyclable, so be sure to check the requirements of your community recycling center.

6. Donate or exchange your paint.

If you can't use your leftover paint, donate it to community groups, theater groups, schools, churches and others who can use it. You may even be able to take a tax deduction. Another good way to get rid of your unwanted leftover paint is to participate in and/or organize a neighbor-to-neighbor or community-wide paint exchange/paint swap. Check with your town to see if they maintain a paint swap shop or if they'll organize a paint swap with their next household hazardous waste collection event.

7. Recycle your paint.

Some communities collect paint for recycling. Recycling can give paint a second chance to be used. Consider buying recycled paint, if available, to help increase the demand for recycled paint. The next time you need paint, ask your paint dealer about it. Recycled paint can be just as good as new.

8. As a last resort, dispose of your paint ... properly of course.

Most people should be able to save, use up, donate, exchange or recycle leftover paint. However, if as a last resort, you need to dispose of your leftover paint, make sure you do it properly.

- Air dry leftover latex-based paint and discard it in your trash. Make sure you do this away from children and pets. One method is to pour the latex paint onto a sheet of plastic and let it dry. Then you can roll it up and toss it out with your regular trash.
- Liquid solvent-based paint should not be discarded with the normal trash. Instead, save it for a special paint collection program or a household hazardous waste program in your community. Contact your town office for details.
- Air drying liquid solvent-based paint is not recommended, but if the paint has completely solidified in a closed can, you can dispose of it in your regular trash.

For more visit the [Pollution Prevention webpage](#) or email nhppp@des.nh.gov or call (603) 271-6460.