



## Paint Wastes

**These are actual complaints received by King County's Hazardous Waste Management Program in 1996:**

...I saw someone washing their equipment and throwing the waste on the ground. The ground is turning white.... Some empty paint cans and brushes were left outside with no lids. They're overflowing in the rain, and paint is running down the pavement.... Paint buckets were rinsed with water that was dumped on the ground. It soaks in after a while, but it's near the river... I saw someone pour a gallon of paint or a paint/water mixture into a storm drain.... About 10 gallons of paint are in the dumpster behind the apartment.

Here are some better ideas.

### Need Paint?

Save money and give yourself a competitive edge with your environmentally conscious customers. When you need paint, check the Industrial Materials Exchange catalog first to see what's available. Paint is in the "Available, Miscellaneous" category. Call 206-296-4899 for a free catalog or visit [www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/](http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/).

### Leftover Paint?

- Use up leftover paint for touchups, primers or undercoats.
- Consolidate partial containers of compatible paint, then retint and use it up.
- If you can't use it, give it away to someone who can. List your leftover paint in the Industrial Materials Exchange (IMEX) at 206-296-4899 or [www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/](http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/). This service is free. In 1996 about 8,900 gallons of paint were exchanged through IMEX.
- Don't take your paint wastes to a household hazardous waste collection site or the Wastemobile. Why? These sites cannot legally accept waste from businesses.

### Latex house paint waste

- Are you sure the paint is waste? Try one of the "Leftover Paint" suggestions first.
- Small quantities of paint with no lead or mercury in it can be dried in the can, painted on cardboard or on boards, then disposed of in a covered dumpster. Most paint manufactured after 1991 has no lead or mercury.

Produced by



as part of the **Local Hazardous Waste  
Management Program in King County**

- House paint manufactured before 1992 likely contains mercury and should be handled as hazardous waste. Use a licensed hazardous waste disposal firm for disposal (see list below). If you're not sure it contains mercury, check the label, the material safety data sheet or test the paint for mercury. Contact the Health Department's Waste Characterization Program at (206) 296-4633 or email [wc@metrokc.gov](mailto:wc@metrokc.gov) for help.
- House paint manufactured before 1978 likely contains lead and should be handled as hazardous waste. Use a licensed hazardous waste disposal firm for disposal (see list below). If you're not sure it contains lead, check the label or test the paint for lead. Contact the Health Department's Waste Characterization Program at (206) 296-4633 for help.

### **Water-based specialty paint waste**

- Are you sure the paint is waste? Try one of the "Leftover Paint" suggestions first.
- Acrylic latexes, sign paints and other water-based specialty paints should be evaluated for their hazardous properties before disposal. Contact the Business Waste Line (206) 296-3976 for help.

### **Wastewater from latex paint cleanup**

Put wastewater from cleaning latex equipment into the *sanitary sewer*, but not a storm drain or septic system. Contact your local sewer utility for authorization if you want to discharge large quantities (more than 100 gallons). The local sewer utility can also help you identify whether a drain leads to the sanitary sewage treatment system or to surface water (creeks, rivers, lakes, or Puget Sound). You can also reuse your wastewater by allowing solids to settle out and pouring off the water into another container. The latex solids can be dried out and managed as latex paint waste (as described above).

### **Oil-based paint waste**

- Are you sure the paint is waste? Try one of the "Leftover Paint" suggestions first.
- Oil-based paints, stains and thinners are usually hazardous waste. Use a licensed hazardous waste management firm for disposal (see the following list).

### **Lacquer thinner or solvent waste**

- Lacquer thinner and solvents can be distilled and reused, either on-site or through an off-site service.
- Sludge and filters left after distillation must be handled as hazardous waste.
- If you don't have a still, a simple way to recycle solvent is to put it in a closed, labeled, compatible container and allow the solids to settle. The cleaner solvent on top can be poured into another container and reused. You can cut your total solvent costs by using this recycled solvent for initial cleaning of dirty equipment and using a small amount of new solvent for final cleaning.
- Eventually the solvent will become too dirty for reuse and will need to be disposed as hazardous waste. The sludge also must be handled as hazardous waste. Use a licensed hazardous waste management firm for recycling or disposal.
- Contact a hazardous waste disposal firm to handle paint waste that designates as hazardous. These firms are listed in the *Hazardous Waste Directory*.

To get a copy, call the Business Waste Line at 206-296-3976 or email [bwl@metrokc.gov](mailto:bwl@metrokc.gov). Find it online at [www.govlink.org/hazwaste](http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste).