



280 Hughes Dr.  
Traverse City, MI 48684  
231-943-8088

## Latex Paint & Stains Disposal

Recent research shows that latex paint and stains can safely be put in the garbage for disposal at a landfill, as long as the paint is dry or solidified first.

Dumped illegally or into the waste stream, liquid latex paint can be a hazard by plugging or damaging septic fields, overloading sewage treatment plants and creating environmental hazards on the ground.

Residents should dry out latex paint and stains and put it in the garbage **with the lid off**, using one of several methods:

- Air:
  - Remove the lid and let the paint dry out in the can
  - Protect from freezing and rain as well as curious children and animals
  - This only works when an inch or less of paint is left in the can and is most effective in the warmer months.
- Cat litter:
  - Mix latex paint with an equal amount of clay-based cat litter
  - Stir in completely and let the paint dry. It takes about 10 minutes for the cat litter to harden.
  - Add more cat litter if the paint is soft or runny after 10 minutes. Repeat until the material is very thick.
  - Sawdust, dirt, and shredded paper can be tried as alternatives to cat litter.
  - If there is not enough room in the paint can to stir in enough cat litter to dry it all out, pour off paint into any plastic or cardboard container that is large enough to hold the material, including a yogurt container, plastic tub, shoebox, or other convenient container.
- Paint hardener:
  - Mix latex paint or stain with commercial paint hardener according to the directions.
  - At the end of that time, paint will have a tacky, oatmeal-like consistency that will not spill out.
- Other ideas of using up latex paint or stains:
  - Use the paint when painting a garage, dog house or use as a primer coat for another painting project.
  - Donate excess paint to a school, theater group or non-profit agency.

Be sure it's latex paint or stain! Look on the label for the word "latex," or for directions to clean up or thin with water. Oil-based paints should be brought to a hazardous waste facility for



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proper disposal. Once the latex paint has hardened or solidified, place the can with **the lid off** in your garbage container. The garbage hauler needs to see that the paint has been solidified.

## Preventing latex paint and stains waste

Buy only what you need and ask the sales staff for assistance to buy the right quantity. You can view an on-line [paint calculator](#) to help estimate the correct amount needed. Everyone has good intentions to use half-filled paint cans for "touch-ups" that never come. Also, many people have saved paint that becomes unusable over time. If you save paint for later, follow some easy tips to make the paint last longer. Just cover the opening with plastic wrap, and make sure the lid fits securely so the paint doesn't leak. Then turn the paint can upside down to create a tight seal, and keep the paint fresh to use again.

## Large quantities of latex paint and stains

Contact your local Household Hazardous Waste contact for information on larger quantities.

[http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3585\\_4130-115394--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3585_4130-115394--,00.html)

Learn to tell the difference between latex and oil-based paint	
Latex	Oil-based
"water based" or "acrylic"	"alkyd"
Contains the words "cleans with water" on the label	Contains the words "cleans with solvent", "flammable" or "combustible" on the label
Can come in a plastic container	Does not come in a plastic container
Dries on wall in 1 hour	Dries on wall overnight