



## FACT SHEET

### Paints & Stains

#### Hazards

- Oil based paints and stains contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that vaporize at room temperature; Vapors may be toxic when inhaled.
- Oil based paints and stains are flammable - store away from sources of sparks or heat.
- Old oil based paints and marine paints may contain lead, mercury, chromium or cadmium, which are toxic to humans, animals and the environment.

#### Handling

- Containers should be opened in a well-ventilated area. Wear appropriate respirator or cartridge mask when pouring off or mixing large volumes of oil-based paints.
- Identify leftover paint as latex or oil-based. Latex paint is labeled as such or has instructions to clean up with water. Oil-based paint may be labeled “alkyd”, “contains solvents”, “clean up with mineral spirits”, or “combustible.”
- Pourable paint may be reused, unless it contains lead. To test if paint is still good, paint a small test area on clean surface and allow to dry for 48 hours. Place a piece of masking tape over the paint and pull off. If paint comes off on the tape, the paint is no longer good.
- To store usable paint for long periods of time, cover the opening of the paint can with a piece of plastic wrap and seal the lid tightly. Store the can upside down and away from heat.
- Do not store latex paint outside or in unheated area. Frozen latex paint cannot be reused.
- Do not put liquid paint in the trash or down the drain.
- Do not dry out oil-based paints, stains, or wood finishes to dispose of in the trash. The volatile chemicals are air pollutants.

#### Management Options

For surplus latex or oil-based paints:

- Take to the municipal surplus paint collection program, if available.
- Put **completely dried** latex paint in the trash.
- Hardened oil-based paint can also be disposed of in the trash.
- If no reuse or recycling option is available or convenient for paints, they should be taken to a Household Hazardous Products Collection Center.

Paints that contain lead, mercury, chromium or cadmium

- **DO NOT** use up and **DO NOT** give away. Toxic metals will remain in painted item.
- Take to Household Hazardous Products Collection Center.

Empty paint cans:

- Empty paint cans may be accepted in community scrap metal programs.
- If recycling is not feasible, empty paint cans can be disposed of in the trash. Leave lids off so the hauler can see that the can is empty.

**REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE**

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