

Latex Paint



The Douglas County Household Chemical Roundups dispose of more than 80 tons (160,000 lbs) of latex paint each year. While this is an impressive sum, it is important to realize that latex paint is a non-hazardous waste, and does not need to be disposed of differently than regular household garbage once it is completely dried out. Due to the fact that it is very expensive for the Roundup Program to dispose of latex paint, it is in every participant's best interest to understand how to easily and responsibly dispose of latex paint at home.

Oil or Water Based Paint?

Key words to tell the difference:

Oil-based

Flammable
Combustible
Varnish
Shellac
Stain
Sealer
Epoxy
Alkyd
Urethane
"Contains petroleum distillates"

Water-based (Latex)

Latex
"Water-clean up"
Vinyl
Acrylic

It is important to be able to identify a water-based paint (latex) from an oil-based paint. The table to the left lists common words found on paint can labels that will help you decide if your paint is latex paint or oil paint.

Before you can throw out your left-over latex paint, you must first make sure that it is completely dried out. In order to dry out your paint, remove the lid from the can, and leave the open can in a safe place to dry. To decrease the time it takes for the paint to dry, it is helpful to add an absorbent material, like kitty litter, dirt, or sand, and mix it in with the paint. As the paint dries, periodically break up the top layer so that any wet paint underneath is exposed to the air.

Once the paint is completely dry, you can throw it out with your other household garbage. Some garbage pickup services request that you leave the lids off the paint cans, so pickup workers can verify that the paint is dry, but check with your city first.

Disposing of your latex paint at home is easy, and saves you and the Roundup Program time and money. Thank you for participating in the Roundup Program, and for being responsible with your waste. Together, we can make a difference!