



# FAIR LAWN RECYCLING DIVISION



## Paint Disposal

### Details

Disposing of unwanted paints and chemicals down sinks and drains can damage sewage and septic systems. Dumping them into a storm drain or on the ground can contaminate surface and groundwater, which we depend upon for drinking, bathing and recreation. Follow these guidelines for proper disposal and to reduce threats to human and wildlife health and the environment.

### Reduce

Properly calculating the amount of paint required for your project will reduce the amount of leftover paint that you will need to discard. There are online paint calculators to assist you.

### Reuse

Leftover paint has a shelf life of 10-15 years. Keep the paint for touch ups that might be needed in the future. To keep the paint from drying up, seal the container properly. Use a rubber mallet to tap down the lid. Store the paint in a cool, dark location like a basement or someplace that is not prone to extreme temperatures.

If you don't want to save the paint, ask a friend or neighbor if they could use the excess. The leftover paint might be perfect for a small project. It also makes for a fun activity for children to paint old scraps of wood or a cardboard box when coupled with proper supervision. Another option is the Paterson Habitat for Humanity. You can contact them at [patersonhabitate.org/restore](http://patersonhabitate.org/restore)

### Oil Based Paints

Oil based paints are considered a household hazardous waste and should be disposed of through the County Hazardous Waste Collection. They are ignitable and their fumes are potentially harmful. To find the next County collection, visit the Bergen County Utilities Authority website at [bcua.org](http://bcua.org).

QUESTIONS?

 **201-794-5341**

[recycling@fairlawn.org](mailto:recycling@fairlawn.org)  
[fairlawn.org/recycling](http://fairlawn.org/recycling)

## Latex Based Paints

Latex paint is also known as water-based, acrylic or emulsion paint. It is comprised mostly of water and is NOT considered a hazardous waste. It can be safely discarded in household trash provided that it is solidified.

If you are unsure if your paint is latex paint, look at the clean-up instructions. Latex paint will instruct you to use "detergent and water" or "soap and water". Oil based will require you to use solvents and chemicals in the cleaning process.

Latex paint is NOT accepted at the BCUA Household Hazardous Waste events. Please use one of the methods below to solidify or dry your paint.

## Latex Based Paints

**Air Dry:** Remove the lid and allow the liquid to evaporate. This works well for small quantities of paint, generally an inch or two at the bottom of the can. This can take several days for fully dry.

**Use a Drying Agent:** Mix an absorbent material into the paint and allow it to dry. These materials include cat litter, sawdust and plaster of Paris. Paint and hardware stores also sell "waste paint hardeners". Drying times for the paint vary depending on the type of material used and the quantities of paint and absorbent material.

**Pour Thin Layers:** Pour about 1 inch layers into a cardboard box with a plastic liner. Allow the paint to dry one layer at a time until all the paint has hardened. Once all of the paint has hardened, the box can be thrown out in the garbage.

Once the paint is thoroughly dry, remove it from the paint can and place the hardened paint into a plastic bag to be thrown in the garbage.

The empty paint can is regular garbage, but it must be placed out with the lid removed so the contractor can see that it is empty.

## PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

### DO NOT

dump the paint on the ground or down a storm drain where it will travel to surface water (lake, pond, stream, etc.) or ground water.

### DO NOT

pour paint down the drain in your home or business. Paint can cause damage to septic and sewer systems.



### DO NOT

throw liquid paint in the garbage. It is illegal and paint can leak from the garbage truck onto Borough streets. Paint on the roadway is slippery and can cause an accident or can be washed into a storm drain, polluting a waterway.

### DO NOT

put illegal or hazardous materials into the garbage or recycling as you will be responsible for the cost of cleaning up the spill or contamination.

These costs can run into the tens of thousands of dollars and in extreme cases nearing a million dollars.

Most homeowners insurance policies will not cover this.

BERGEN COUNTY UTILITIES AUTHORITY - HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTIONS

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