

Paint Disposal



Latex paint

Snohomish County's Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Station no longer accepts latex paint. Latex paint has been very expensive for us to process and recent research shows that latex paint can be safely put in the garbage if it's dry and solidified first. While this is a waste of a reusable and recyclable resource, until a product stewardship program for paint is established, residents will need to pass their unused latex paint on to others who can use it, or dry it out and put it in the garbage (see back panel).

Oil-based paints and other toxic products

Maybe since you won't be taking boxes of non-toxic latex paint to our HHW facility, you don't think it is worth the drive for just a few cans of oil paint, a box of pesticides and a mercury thermometer. Toxic products are dangerous to you, your family and pets, and the environment—even in very small amounts! Please continue to bring these toxic products to us, even though you won't have a trunk load of non-toxic latex paint to deliver! A special trip for just a few toxic products is a good investment in your health and the environment.

Properly dispose of latex paint

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

Liquids are not accepted in garbage. Liquid paint can spill while awaiting collection or in the collection and transportation process. Paint leaking into trucks and onto roadways poses tremendous cleanup challenges. When dumped at transfer stations and run over by equipment, paint can splash our equipment, employees and customers!

(over)

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Three ways to dry out latex paint

- 1 Remove the paint can lid and let the paint dry out in the can, in a well-ventilated area. Protect from freezing and rain as well as curious children and pets. This only works when an inch or less of paint is left in the can and is most effective in the warmer months.
- 2 Mix kitty litter, mulch, soil, sawdust or shredded paper into the latex paint and allow the mixture to dry. Use a 50/50 mixture for the fastest drying time.
- 3 Mix a commercial paint hardener such as "Waste-Away" with latex paint according to the directions.

Once the latex paint has hardened or solidified, put the can in your garbage container. When the paint is a tacky, oatmeal-like consistency, and will not spill out, it is ready for disposal. Leave the lid off the paint can so the garbage truck drivers can see that it is empty or contains only dried paint.

Product Stewardship is coming!

Snohomish County Solid Waste has participated in national negotiations with paint manufacturers, who have agreed to establish a collection program for latex and oil-based paints in the future throughout Washington State. It will take several years to establish this collection system, and industry supported enabling legislation is expected in 2012. When the new product stewardship system is funded and established by the paint industry (similar to the electronics recycling program), you will again have a location to take your unwanted latex paint so it can be reused and recycled.

Please contact us with questions about paint disposal.



Snohomish County Public Works

Solid Waste

425-388-3425, TTY: 425-388-3700
www.snoco.org, search "solid waste"

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