

STORM WATER IS NOT TREATED, SO BE PAINT SMART.

Painters work with a variety of materials including paints, stains, varnishes, thinners, strippers, brush cleaners and other solvents, epoxies, glues, sealants, wood preservatives and aerosol spray paints.

It is against the law to dump any of these materials into storm drains.

Penalties for illegal disposal are severe and can include fines, incarceration, and/or financial responsibility for clean-up costs. By disposing of paint waste properly you can help protect our drinking water and the aquatic life in our local waterways.

REMEMBER TO PRACTICE SAFE DISPOSAL!

Clean water is all about prevention and being aware of behaviors that can lead to storm water pollution. Harris County and the City of Houston are here to help.

For more information visit
our website at
www.cleanwaterclearchoice.org

Report Illegal Dumping!
Harris County Environmental
Public Health Division
(713) 920-2831
City of Houston
311



THIS IS NOT A GARBAGE CAN.



Storm Water Quality
A painter's guide to
storage, disposal, and
clean-up of paint wastes.

www.CleanWaterClearChoice.org

So, how can painters manage paint wastes easily and economically?

Paint contains chemicals including solvents and metals that can pollute water when washed down a storm drain or when disposed of improperly.

AVOID PAINT DISPOSAL

- For small leftover amounts, consider applying an additional coat or combining paint for use as a base or primer.
- For larger leftover amounts, arrange for the distributor or manufacturer to take back unused or unopened paints, or donate paint to schools, theaters, churches or graffiti projects in need of it.
- Scrape containers with a rubber spatula to remove the most paint possible. You can salvage up to 9% of your paint this way.

PROPER PAINT DISPOSAL

- Latex paint may be solidified using commercial paint hardener or adsorbent materials such as, kitty litter.
- Dried latex paints can be thrown away in your regular trash.
- Oil-based paint is considered a hazardous waste and must be properly disposed of. You may find a licensed hazardous waste contractor in the yellow pages under "Hazardous Material Control and Removal."

RECYCLE AND REUSE

- Keep latex and oil-based paints separate. Mixing these paints together makes disposal more costly.
- Buy recycled paints. They cost much less than virgin latex paint, are equivalent to most commercially available medium-grade paints and are available in a number of colors.
- Reuse thinners and solvents for equipment cleaning by filtering out particles with reusable wire screen, or by allowing particles to settle.

BUY SMART

- Estimate paint needs carefully. Buy and tint/mix only what you think will be used.
- Use latex paints rather than oil-based paints whenever possible. Oil-based paints require solvents for cleanup, and cannot be recycled.

Note: If customers insist on oil-based paints, consider charging an environmental fee to cover disposal costs and your time.

- Avoid toxic components when possible.
 - Look for non-solvent stripping products (citrus-based, peel-away, etc.).
 - Choose solvents and thinners that are not chlorinated (for example, avoid methylene chloride).
 - Use organic additives for mold, mildew and algae control instead of heavy metal additives, such as mercury.
 - Choose paint pigments that do not contain heavy metals such as, copper and chromium.

STORE SAFELY

- Cover and seal materials tightly to avoid contamination, and keep paint from drying. Store paint cans upside down to keep paint from drying out.
- Store all paint-related products/wastes in a covered area away from floor drains, the gutter, and street and storm drains, both in shop and at the site. Keep absorbent pads on hand to catch any spilled material and to block sewer or storm drains.
- Secure containers in vehicles to avoid spills during transportation.

USE WISELY

- When outdoors, use tarps and drop cloths to prevent overspray and spills.
- Protect storm drains with burlap, sand bags, or other spill prevention products while painting in case of spills.

CLEAN-UP WITH CARE

- Never clean equipment in gutters, streets, or storm drains.
- Paint out brushes and rollers as much as possible before cleaning, and **For Latex Paint:** Always clean equipment in a sink.
For Oil Based Paint: Reuse cleaning solvents/thinners and look for the least toxic products available.

Most of all, never, ever dispose of paint down a storm drain!