



# Disposing of Latex

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There are two types of paints commonly sold for home use—water-based latex paints and oil-based paints.

Oil based paints, (as well as wood finishes, shellacs, varnishes, wood protectors, mildew resistant paints, and “preservative” paints) must be brought to a Household Chemicals Drop-off if you want to get rid of them. In Emmet County you can call 231-348-0640 for information on up-coming drop-off days.

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**Bring latexes manufactured before 1980 (which may contain lead) or labeled “mildew resistant” or “wood preservative” to a Household Chemicals Drop-off.**

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The rest of this flyer is about latex paints manufactured after 1980.

## **Solidify It Then Take It to the Emmet County Transfer Station**

To dispose of modern latex paint, solidify it then take it to the Emmet County Transfer Station. Here’s how:

### *What you’ll need:*

- newspaper, drop-cloths, or plastic sheeting to protect the area where you plan to work,
- a screw driver and/or other tools to open the cans,
- *scoopable* kitty litter,
- stir sticks,
- coffee cans, ice cream buckets, or similar containers with lids if any of your paint cans are over 2/3 full, and
- paper towels or rags for clean up.

### *What to Do—1•2•3!*

1. Open up a can (this can be difficult, but remember you’re planning to throw them away so you won’t need the can to seal well anymore). If it’s more than 2/3 full, pour some of it into a coffee can, ice cream bucket, or the like.

2. Put in some kitty litter, and stir it up. Start with a cup or two of the cat litter; how much you need will depend on the nature and condition of the paint.

3. When the paint is a stiff, putty-like consistency, close up the cans/buckets and bring them to the Emmet County Transfer Station. You’ll be charged to dispose of it as regular garbage. The Transfer Station is open 8-4 weekdays and 8-3 Saturdays and is located at 7363 Pleasantview Road (1 mile north of M-119).

## **Deciding if it is latex paint**

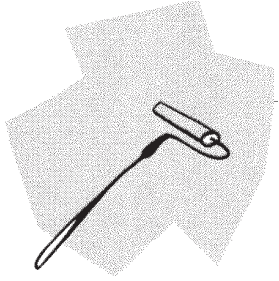
First try looking for “latex” on the label. If the label is missing or covered with paint, you may be able to tell which kind of paint you have based on how it was thinned and cleaned up: If water will rinse fresh paint off hands and brushes the paint is a latex. If paint thinner, mineral spirits, or a special brush cleaner must be used to clean up, then the paint is oil-based. So, if you remember using the paint and that you didn’t have to use paint thinner, turpentine, mineral spirits, or other solvents (other than water) to clean up, then it is latex paint.

If you can’t figure out whether it is latex paint, assume it is oil-based and call 231-238-0660 for information about bringing the paint to a Household Chemical Drop-off day.

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# 231-348-0660





### The best places to start

It may be too late this time, but the best way to handle extra paint is to avoid buying it. Most paints list how many square feet they will cover on the label. Measure the area you plan to paint (multiply the length of the wall in feet by its height to get square feet) and ask the salesperson in the paint department for help in buying only the amount you need. This way you avoid waste and save your money and time.

Next, use up the paint you buy. If there's just a bit left, apply another coat somewhere to use it up. Or, use it for touch ups later.

If you plan to use paint for future touch ups, be sure to store it in a heated building because freezing ruins latex paint. If the paint is watery or the clear and colored portions keep separating when you try to mix them, then your paint is not usable.

### How NOT TO Dispose of Latex Paint

Latex paint is less toxic than oil-based paint, but it still has poisonous chemicals in it. Since latex paint is often up to half water, it can easily soak into soil or spread through water in the environment. So while it's okay to rinse brushes and rollers and clean-up your hands at a sink after

painting with a latex, do not pour paint into drains connected to septic tanks or municipal sewage systems, nor into storm drains. And, while it's designed to be safe to dispose of in an ordinary landfill, it must be solidified first.

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### Summary....

- **Do not** pour paint down any kind of drain (to storm drains, sewer system, or septic system) or put liquid paint in the trash.
  - Solidify latex paints\* and dispose of them as trash at the Emmet County Transfer Station.
  - \*However, if you suspect a latex paint was *manufactured before 1980* or the label says it is "*mildew resistant*" or "*wood preservative*," bring it to a Household Chemical Drop-off.
  - Bring all non-latex paints, stains, shellacs, varnishes, and other wood and metal finishes you want to get rid of to a Household Chemical Drop-off.
  - **Call 231-348-0660 to access the Emmet County Household Chemical Drop-Off .**
  - **Thank you for protecting the environment!**
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