

WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY OLD PAINT?

Non-latex paints and stains (oil-based, alkyd, enamel, marine paints, and similar paints, and most wood stains) should never be placed in the regular trash and must be taken to one of Gloucester's two Harmful Household Waste collections held the **third Saturday in April** and the **third Saturday in October** at the Hayes Convenience Center on Guinea Road.

If you're having trouble determining what kind of paint or stain you have, a good rule to follow is any paint or stain that requires paint thinner, mineral spirits, or a special brush cleaner for cleanup should be considered **non-latex**. Latex paint labeled "mildew resistant" or "wood preservative"; latex paint manufactured before 1980; or old latex paint that weighs more than you would expect (may contain lead) should also be disposed of at one of the two Harmful Household Waste collections.

Latex and Latex Acrylic Paints

Latex paint is not considered harmful household waste once it has been dried or "solidified" and may be placed in the regular trash after it is properly prepared. It may take several days or longer for the paint to harden sufficiently to be placed in the trash. (Convenience Centers and refuse haulers will not accept waste latex or latex acrylic paint in liquid form – it must be dried or solidified first.)

Because liquid latex paint is often more than 1/2 water, it can easily soak into the soil or spread through water in the environment. If the paint is not dried or solidified before it is thrown out, it can seep into groundwater and shallow wells.

Liquid latex paint may leak out of cans when refuse containers are picked up by trucks or if collected by trash trucks and compacted. This could result in paint splattering on vehicles, road surfaces, or other property.

If there is one inch or less of latex paint left in the can, simply remove the lid and let the paint dry out. Once the paint is dry, you may dispose of the paint with your regular trash.

If there is more than an inch of latex paint left in a can, separate the paint into several cans so no can is more than 1/3 full. Mix the paint with an equal amount of an absorbent material (such as regular clay cat litter – ***not*** the clumping kind, sawdust, or shredded newspaper) and stir. The mixture should become stiff and take on a putty-like consistency. Allow the paint to stand uncovered for several days while protecting the paint from rain, snow, or other water contamination. Once the paint is fully solidified, dispose of the paint with your regular trash.

While it is okay to clean brushes, rollers, and other painting tools at the sink, never pour leftover paint down any drain connected to septic tanks, sewage systems, or storm drains.