

Latex Paint Disposal Guide

How do I know if my paint is latex?

- ✍️ **Look for Key Words**—if your paint is latex, it will have the words “latex,” “water-based,” or “acrylic” on the can. Non-latex paint will say “oil based” or “alkyd.”
- ✍️ **Check Clean-up Instructions**—if you can’t find the words “latex,” “water-based” or “acrylic,” check the label for clean-up instructions. Latex paint cleans up with soap and water. Oil-based paint requires cleanup with paint thinner, turpentine, mineral spirits, or solvent.



What if I still cannot tell if it is latex?

If you cannot read the label, assume the paint is oil-based and bring it to a Household Hazardous Waste collection.

How do I dispose of unwanted latex paint?

Latex paint is NOT accepted at Household Hazardous Waste events, but you can safely and easily dispose of it yourself. Liquid latex paint cannot be thrown away. Instead, dry it out using the following techniques. Once dried, latex paint and cans may be taken to your local transfer station or landfill for disposal.

- ✍️ If the paint can is less than 1/4 full, harden the remaining paint using an absorbent material such as kitty litter, newspaper, or sawdust.



- ✍️ If very little paint remains, remove the lid and allow the paint to air dry.

- ✍️ For larger quantities of paint, line a cardboard box with plastic and fill with a thin layer of paint (about 1 inch deep). Add shredded newspaper and allow paint to harden. Repeat this process one layer at a time until all of the paint has hardened.

- ✍️ You can also purchase a commercial waste paint hardener at your local home improvement store to help dry latex paint.



Why can't I bring my latex paint to a household hazardous waste collection?

Today's latex (water-based) paint has a very low level of toxicity and is not considered household hazardous waste **when dried**. Disposing of it at a household hazardous waste collection day is very expensive. Therefore, we ask people with unwanted latex paint to use other options to dispose of it.

For more information about the Household Hazardous Waste Program, visit www.lakesrpc.org/serviceshhw.asp or call 603-279-5341.