



According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), each year, residents flush thousands of gallons of leftover or unwanted paint, stains, solvents and paint thinners down their sinks and drains or dump thousands of gallons more into their trash cans. These actions can overwhelm sewage systems, destroy septic tanks and damage landfills' protective barriers. The resulting contamination fouls the surface and underground waters we all depend on for consumption and recreation. You can ease these threats to human health and the environment by following a few simple steps.

The easiest way to dispose of paint is to use it up completely by applying a second coat to your project or using it up on a piece of old cardboard or scrap wood. Many local theatre groups, colleges, churches and housing authorities will accept leftover paint, but call first.

Latex Paint:

Latex paint is not accepted at Household Chemical Waste (HCW) facilities. It can be disposed of at home because it is a non-toxic, water-based paint. You can add an absorbent material such as shredded newspapers, kitty litter, sawdust, or waste paint hardener to your latex paint and let it dry out completely in a well-ventilated area and away from children and pets. Once it is dry, put the container in your regular garbage with the lid off so the waste hauler knows the can is empty.

Oil Based Paint:

Oil-based paint, stains, solvents and paint thinners contain lead, cadmium and other highly toxic chemicals and must be taken to a household chemical waste facility for safe disposal.

Household Chemical Waste (HCW)

Household Chemical Waste (HCW) collections are conducted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and are available to all Illinois residents. There are four locations in Illinois for residentially-generated materials only – no business, school or institutional materials will be accepted. For details of the locations and acceptable materials, visit <http://www.swancc.org/chemicals/residential>.

For companies that will manage and recycle a large quantity of paint for a fee, or to watch SWANCC's informational video of how to dry out paint, visit <http://www.swancc.org/paint>.

Live green at [swancc.org](http://www.swancc.org)
Join SWANCC on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)