

## Storing leftover paints

Use the smallest container possible to minimize air flow and prevent the paint from drying. Label the container with the brand, color, date and the room or project it matches. Store it in a dry location above freezing temperatures.

## Disposing of paint, stains & solvents\*

*\*To reduce taxpayer costs for HHW disposal, dry out paint instead of bringing it to the HHW collection site. Use the regular trash for fully dried paints and dry painting tools. If taking old paint to a HHW collection, combine like-type cans of paint into fewer cans. Those with more than 20 gallon containers of paint need to make an appointment with Orange County Solid Waste Management.*

For **latex paint**, open the lid, stir in kitty litter and set outside in a covered area until completely dry. You may need to stir occasionally. The can and its dry contents may then be placed in your regular trash with the lid off.

Take old **oil-based paints and stains** to the HHW collection site. Transport labeled cans in a cardboard box lined with newspaper. Make sure lids are secure. If fully dried out, cans of paint can be thrown in the trash with the lids off.

### Orange County, NC Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Center

1514 Eubanks Rd, Chapel Hill  
Monday - Friday 10:00AM - 6:00PM  
Saturday 8:00AM - Noon

Questions about HHW may be directed to  
Orange County Solid Waste Management  
919-968-2788

recycling@orangecountync.gov  
www.orangecountync.gov/recycling/



## Town of Chapel Hill Stormwater Management

### Mailing Address:

405 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

### Physical Address:

208 N. Columbia Street 2nd Floor  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

stormwater@townofchapelhill.org  
www.townofchapelhill.org/stormwater

### Report Stormwater Issues

911 for emergencies  
919-969-RAIN (7246)

This brochure is modified from an article by Sheryl Ryan

# Cleaning up after painting & staining



Protect the environment, your home, and your health while beautifying your home or working on projects.



Recover as much paint as possible before cleaning tools.



Know proper cleaning methods for the type of paint or stain you use. Don't rely on unofficial videos.



Dispose of waste safely & properly. It is against federal, state and local laws to contaminate soil and water.

# NEVER pour or rinse stains, solvents or paints onto the ground or into a storm drain!

Chemicals and wash water can flow into waterways after a rain, harming plants and animals and polluting local creeks and drinking water supplies.



**Latex (water-based) paints** are safer for the environment than oil-based paints, but are not as safe as natural paints. Low-VOC and zero-VOC latex paints should be treated in the same manner as regular latex paint.

## Cleaning up latex paint

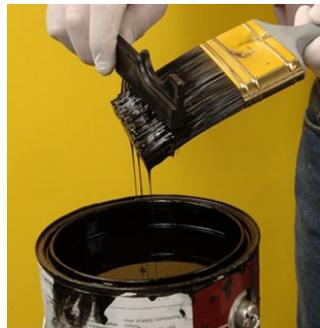
- 1) Brush or roll out as much as possible. Use gloved hands or a wire paint comb to squeeze excess latex paint from the brush or roller back into the can. Squeeze the brushes again with paper towels or newsprint to remove more paint.
- 2) If your home is connected to the **municipal sewer system**, you can wash latex paint brushes directly in the sink after removing as much paint as possible.
- 3) For those with **septic tanks**, use a small bucket to wash and a larger bucket for rinse water. Let the paint drop to the bottom before pouring off the top, clear water. Let the remaining water evaporate outdoors for several days until only dry paint is left.
- 4) Discard dried latex paint and cleanup materials with regular household trash.

**Oil-based paints and stains** can add rich color and depth to a project, but their cleanup requires special care. They, and solvents and rags used to clean tools after their use, are hazardous materials with dangerous fumes and flammable properties. Improper cleanup can cause fires and harm creeks, water supplies, and nearby plant and animal life.

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**DO NOT EMPTY SOLVENTS IN A SINK OR ALLOW THEM TO ENTER SOIL OR WATER**  
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## Cleaning up oil-based paint & stain

- 1)The **solvents** you'll need to clean oil-based paint and stain can produce dangerous fumes, so prepare your workspace outdoors or in a well-ventilated room. Lay down a drop cloth to protect the floor or the soil and wear rubber gloves to protect your hands.
- 2) Using a wire paint comb, scrape as much paint as possible back into the paint can.



3) Fill an old coffee can, glass jar, or clean paint can with a couple of inches of solvent to soak the brushes. Swirl them around for five minutes, remove the brushes and comb excess solvent back into the container.



4) Use a rag, paper towels or newspaper to blot the solvent from the paintbrushes.

5) Then soak and blot 2-3 more times using a fresh container of solvent each time.

6) Combine the used solvents in one well-labeled container for Household Hazardous Waste disposal or to prepare for reuse.\*

7) Hang brushes to dry. Solvent-laden rags or paper can burst into flames if conditions are right. **Immediately** after use, lay rags and/or solvent laden paper **flat** in a **cool, well aerated** location to dry. Keep them in **single layers and away from combustible surfaces or materials** to prevent fires. Rags and paper may be put in the regular trash when completely dry. Drying may take a couple of days, so be patient and vigilant.

\* To reuse the solvent, let the paint solids settle for a few days. Once settled, pour the solvent through a coffee filter or non-food strainer into a glass jar. Dry out the remaining paint solids and discard them with your trash.