



# Drop & Swaps



# Benefits

- Reduces the amount of good latex paint wasted
- Reduces \$ spent on disposal/ recycling
- Great free product!
- Relatively easy to develop & maintain by leveraging an existing facility & personnel



# Considerations

Paint must be in good condition

- Cans should be at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  full
- Check for
  - mold or other contaminants
  - strong rancid odor (chemical odor is good)
  - solvent has separated from the solids & the two don't mix
  - clumps that don't separate when stirred
  - inconsistent color after being stirred

# Considerations

- Monitored by staff or volunteers
- Proper storage
  - designated paint shed with shelves
  - containment/cleanup materials
  - protection from freezing temps
- Marketing & outreach



**The Latex Paint Exchange  
Fulton County, NY**

# Considerations

Need to manage paint that is not swapped

- Arrange donation to local organization
- Blend & use for public buildings
- Dispose / recycle



**The Paint Exchange  
Scituate, MA**

# Fulton County

- Swapped 340 gallons in 2012 (3,793 since 2001)
- Summer only at solid waste transfer station
- Unusable paint from HHW day is dried out by staff & disposed of as solid waste
- Un-swapped paint is donated to local community theater (only 15 cans in 2012)







# Chenango County

- Swap 300-400 cans of latex paint per season
- Liability forms signed at drop-off & pick-up
- Spring & summer at existing transfer station
- Unusable paint is dried out by staff & disposed
- Leftover consolidated & re-blended by local paint manufacturer & given back to the County for free

# Guidance Document



## REDUCING, REUSING, & RECYCLING

### Waste Latex Paint in Rural Communities

**M**any communities struggle with how to help residents properly manage and reduce disposal of the significant amounts of leftover latex paint they generate. This fact sheet is designed to help local government officials in rural communities better understand options available for reducing, reusing, and recycling this paint.

Latex paint represents more than 80 percent of the paint that consumers purchase.<sup>1</sup> Disposing of unused latex paint wastes valuable resources and unnecessarily consumes landfill space. Before leftover latex paint can be thrown in the trash, it needs to be dried out – a process that can take weeks and requires protection from bad weather and access by pets and children. Because drying leftover paint is often not convenient, it ends up accumulating in basements and garages where it can go bad due to improper storage. Often, people do not know what to do with their unused paint and put the liquid paint in the trash, increasing the potential for releases to the environment. Decreasing the amount of waste paint can save local governments money on disposal fees.

Alternatives to disposal include: preventing too much paint from ending up as waste, facilitating the reuse of leftover latex paint, and collecting latex paint for recycling. Each of these is discussed below.

#### Preventing Waste Paint

Preventing the generation of waste paint is the best way to improve its management. Education is key to waste prevention. This can occur at the point-of-sale and after the job is completed. Retailers and local solid waste programs can encourage their customers and residents to purchase only the amount of paint they need for their project (see box on page 2). Consumers can learn to store unused paint properly so that they can use or donate it in the future.

#### What are the Benefits of Preventing Waste Paint?

- Households buy less paint, save money, and reduce clutter.
- Consumers properly store their leftover paint so that they can reuse it.
- Communities avoid a potential environmental or health hazard.

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<sup>1</sup>Oil-based paint wastes are hazardous because of their toxic constituents and flammability and should continue to be handled through household hazardous waste (HHW) collection programs when available.

Brochure targeted to municipalities & others that manage waste paint.



# Consumer Fact Sheet

## TIPS for Minimizing Paint Waste

Many people find that properly managing paint waste is a hassle – so the cans keep accumulating. If you face this problem, try to: minimize the amount of leftover paint by knowing your coverage requirements ahead of time and buying only what you need, and correctly store your leftover paint so that it can be reused.

### Buying the Right Amount of Paint

By purchasing only what you need, you will save money and reduce the clutter in your home or storage area.

Before going to the store, take a minute to quickly estimate how much paint you need. Just answer these few easy questions:

- How many coats of paint do I want to apply?
- For interior rooms, what are the floor dimensions and ceiling height?
- For exterior siding, what is the approximate wall height and width for each side of the structure?

Use these estimates to calculate the square footage of the entire area.

Generally, one gallon of paint covers 400 square feet with one coat; however, dry porous wall material might require more. So for example, if you estimate that you have a total of 400 square feet of wall space and you want to apply 2 coats of paint, you should buy 2 gallons of paint.

For a more accurate estimate, consider the number of windows and doors in the structure. Ask the store clerks for help, or check out:

- Benjamin Moore's paint calculator for interior rooms: [www.benjaminmoore.com/en-us/for-your-home/paint-calculator](http://www.benjaminmoore.com/en-us/for-your-home/paint-calculator).
- Lowe's paint calculator for interior and exterior jobs: [www.lowes.com/cd\\_Paint+Calculator\\_953562246](http://www.lowes.com/cd_Paint+Calculator_953562246).

### What NOT to Do with Leftover Latex Paint

Liquid latex paint that is thrown away in the trash or is poured down the drain can be released to the environment and cause contamination.

#### DO NOT:

- Throw containers with even small amounts of latex paint in the trash
- Pour leftover paint down the drain or sewer

### Other Tips for Paint Purchasing

If you are trying a new color, test it out at home by purchasing a 4-ounce sample size. Then if you don't like how it looks, you won't have a whole gallon (or more) that you can't use.

Stores mix paint colors using standard formulas, so it is easy to buy more at a later date if necessary. Professional painters recommend having 1-quart of paint left over for touch-ups.

Look for recycled content paint, which is priced significantly lower than virgin paint and has the same quality. By using recycled content paint, you are preventing it from being landfilled and saving the resources needed to manufacture new paint.



### Storing Leftover Paint So It Can Be Reused

In order for leftover paint to be useable at a later date, it needs to be stored so it doesn't have contact with air or go through a freeze/thaw cycle more than once or twice. Follow a few simple steps to keep leftover paint fresh and reusable:

- Do not store in unheated garages, attics, or outside storage sheds – these areas may experience freezing temperatures.
- Cover the opened can with plastic wrap before securely placing the lid back on, then store the can upside down.

Companion fact sheet targeted to consumers, painting contractors, & users of paint.



# Consumer Fact Sheet

## Customize with Local Information

- Donation options
  - Local charities, religious organizations, community theatre groups, schools, government offices, others
- Paint exchange programs
  - Community “drop & swaps”
  - Online materials exchange programs
- Collection centers for recycling - TBD
- Disposal options - SW & HHW
  - Municipal and/or private disposal companies



# Feedback

- Should we design it for the current situation (no recycling)?
- Are there local places to donate used paint?
  - Is someone willing to do a bit of research?
  - Or provide NEWMOA with some suggestions to contact?
- Should we include Drop & Swap?
  - Is anyone interested in pursuing this option for their town?
- If we are including Recycling a la PaintCare, should we also include disposal information? HHW information?
- Should we distinguish between oil-based and latex paints?
- Anything else that should be included or reworded?



# Outreach

- Distribute through:
  - paint retail locations
  - HHW events
  - other local events
- Insert in regular town mailings:
  - tax bills
  - utility bills
  - communications on solid waste or HHW management
- Announcements in local newspaper
- Posters on community bulletin boards
- Information on town's website

# Next Steps

- Finalize consumer handout for Maine
  - Create an online template to customize with local information
- Conduct needs assessments/gap analysis







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