

# Paint

Painting is an easy way to update a room, but more often than not, afterward, you end up with half of an unused can. Since leftover paint can be hazardous, as it contains materials that can leak into the ground, cause physical injury to sanitation workers, or contaminate septic tanks, you have to be careful when throwing it away



Interior paints fall into two overarching categories determine by their makeup:

- oil-based :

Solvent or oil-based paint can last up to 15 years.

- water-based:

Latex or water-based paint typically has a shelf life of 10 years.

You can test the paint to see it's still good.

#### Latex Paint:

1. Smell it. Does it smell rancid? If it does, it's gone bad.
2. Check to see if the paint is separated. There will usually be a thin skin on top with a layer of liquid underneath. Remove the skin and using a paint stick, stir the paint. Make sure that the paint isn't hard on the bottom of the sides. If the paint blends smoothly and appears to be the original color, then it's okay to use it.
3. If you're still unsure, brush some of the paint onto a piece of newspaper. If the paint comes out rough and lumpy, you need to dispose of it.

#### Oil-Based Paint:

1. If it hasn't been exposed to extreme temperatures and was sealed properly, then oil-based paint typically isn't as susceptible to going bad as latex. Just remove the layer of film across the top and stir it well before painting.

### General steps for disposing of:

#### Latex Paint:

##### ❖ Small amount :

- Wet latex paint can be hazardous, so dry it up. If there's paint in the bottom of your can, leaving it out in the sun should do the trick.
- If there's a bit more than the sun can handle:
  - **Step 1: Combine With Cat Litter :**  
Add equal parts cat litter to the latex paint in the can. If you have more than half a can, you can also pour the paint into a lined box or trash can. Then pour in the cat litter.
  - **Step 2: Allow the Mixture to Set :**  
Stir the cat litter into the paint until it thickens and won't spill. Allow the mixture to sit for one hour.
  - **Step 3: Throw It in the Garbage :**  
Throw the dried paint in the can in the garbage. Be sure to remove the lid from the can.

❖ **Large amounts :**

- , purchase a paint hardener, like Homax 3535 3 Pack Waste-Away Paint Hardener at a home improvement store for just a few dollars.
- Check your local laws, but in many locations, you can throw away dried-out paint with the rest of your household trash.

❖ **If you can't properly dispose of the paint curbside, let the professionals handle it:**

- Companies like [Habitat for Humanity](#) and [PaintCare](#) accept leftover paint to recycle. You can also search for a hazardous waste drop-off facility in your area at [Earth911.com](#)

## **Oil-Based Paint:**

- ❖ Oil-based paint is considered hazardous waste and must be taken to an appropriate disposal or drop-off center. Check with your local officials for information and instructions about where to dispose of paint safely.

