

# Painting



A fresh coat of paint on buildings and outside fixtures keeps a business looking good. However, it is important to remember that paints and solvents contain chemicals that are harmful to wildlife and humans. Proper handling, storage and disposal of these products can prevent pollutants from entering storm drains and causing water pollution. Many of these products, as well as any materials used to apply or clean up these products, must be taken to a permitted hazardous waste disposal facility. Please refer to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/hazardous-waste](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/hazardous-waste) or [www.knowtoxics.com](http://www.knowtoxics.com) to find hazardous waste disposal contractors and transporters.



## TO PREVENT WATER POLLUTION

- Use less toxic, water-based paints whenever possible. Look for the words "latex" or "cleans up with water" on the label.
- Never clean paint brushes or rollers or rinse out paint containers in the street or near a storm drain. Water-based paint can be washed off in a sink that is connected to the sanitary sewer system.
- Filter and reuse thinner and solvents when cleaning up oil-based paints.
- Treat leftover cleaning fluids, materials and oil-based paints as hazardous waste and dispose of properly.
- Use tarps to catch drips and spills. Clean up spills immediately with absorbent rags. If nonhazardous, dispose of the rags in the trash. Properly dispose of rags contaminated by hazardous waste.
- When grinding or blasting to remove old paint, spread a tarp below the work area to collect dust and paint chips. Cover nearby storm drain inlets. Dispose of debris in the trash. Avoid using hoses or blowers.
- Secure paint and chemicals during transport to avoid spills.
- Recycle, return to the supplier or donate unwanted water-based (latex) paint. Dried latex paint and empty paint cans may be disposed of in the garbage.

### KEEP IT CLEAN!

Remove the lid to allow leftover latex paint to dry in the can and then throw it out in the regular trash. Or pour paint on a newspaper, let it dry and then throw it away in the trash.



For information on how to dispose of unused oil-based paints and solvents see [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/hazardous-waste](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/hazardous-waste)



Department of Public Works and Environmental Services  
Stormwater Planning Division  
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax, VA 22035-0052  
703-324-5500, TTY 711 / [SWPDmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:SWPDmail@fairfaxcounty.gov)  
To request this information in an alternate format call 703-324-5500,  
TTY 711. A Fairfax County, VA., publication April 2018