



So Long, Old Paint!

Tips On How To Use And Dispose Of Leftover Paint

Some things are hard to throw away. Like old love letters, or your favorite sweater with the holes in the elbows.

Or all those cans of leftover paint in the garage -- not for sentimental reasons, but because you don't know where to throw them. The trash collectors may not take them, the landfill may not want them, and it's risky (and possibly illegal) to pour them

down the drain.



Many paint companies get a lot of questions about disposing of old paint safely. Unfortunately, there is no single, simple answer, but the following National Paint and Coatings Association (NPCA) guidelines should help.

Try not to buy more than you need. In a perfect world, you would finish off your paint job with the last brushful in the can - supply and demand in perfect balance. In real life, it seldom works out that way, but some simple steps can get you close.



Careful measurement of your room (with accurate deductions for windows and doors) or the objects you are planning to paint will help your paint salesperson estimate how much you need. Also, see what the label directions say about coverage. An average coverage rate is 400 to 450 square feet per gallon for one-coat coverage, although that figure may vary depending on the condition of the surface you are painting and the type of paint product you are using.

Think of other uses for leftover paint.

If there's only a little paint left in the can, use it up. This shouldn't cause any variation in color if the surface is light or medium in color (if the paint you're using is a very dark or bright color however, variation could result).

Leftover paint can also be saved for touching up scrapes and smudges later. Be sure to replace the lid tightly and store the paint away from extreme heat, cold or flame sources, pilot lights, and out of the reach of children and pets. Make sure the lid is secured to prevent leakage, and store the paint can upside down. The paint will create a seal around the lid, preserving the paint quality.

If you have a full, unopened can of a stock (factory-mixed) color (not a custom-tinted paint), check with your dealer or retailer to see if you can get a refund.

No matter how you make use or dispose of your leftover paint, remember -- never contaminate it by pouring anything else into the can!

If you can provide a color sample of their contents, unopened cans may attract a buyer at a yard sale. Or consider a giveaway: community theater groups, churches, recreation departments, day-care centers or shelters may be glad to accept and use free leftover paint. This is a good way to add new life to old, useable paint.