



**C**lean beaches and healthy creeks, rivers, bays and ocean are important to Orange County. However, many common activities such as painting can lead to water pollution if you're not careful. Paint must be used, stored and disposed of properly to ensure that it does not enter the street, gutter or storm drain. Unlike water in sanitary sewers (from sinks and toilets), water in storm drains is not treated before entering our waterways.

You would never dump paint into the ocean, so don't let it enter the storm drains. Follow these easy tips to help prevent water pollution.

For more information, please call the **Orange County Stormwater Program** at (714) 567-6363 or visit [www.ocwatersheds.com](http://www.ocwatersheds.com)

To report a spill, call the **Orange County 24-Hour Water Pollution Problem Reporting Hotline** at (714) 567-6363.

**For emergencies, dial 911.**

The tips contained in this brochure provide useful information to help prevent water pollution while using, storing and disposing of paint. If you have other suggestions, please contact your city's stormwater representatives or call the Orange County Stormwater Program.



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Help Prevent Ocean Pollution:

## Tips for Projects Using Paint



# Tips for Projects Using Paint

Paint can cause significant damage to our environment. Whether you hire a contractor or do it yourself, it is important to follow these simple tips when purchasing, using, cleaning, storing and disposing of paint.

## *Purchasing Paint*

- Measure the room or object to be painted, then buy only the amount needed.
- Whenever possible, use water-based paint since it usually does not require hazardous solvents such as paint thinner for cleanup.

## *Painting*

- Use only one brush or roller per color of paint to reduce the amount of water needed for cleaning.
- Place open paint containers or trays on a stable surface and in a position that is unlikely to spill.
- Always use a tarp under the area or object being painted to collect paint drips and contain spills.

## *Cleaning*

- Never clean brushes or rinse paint containers in the street, gutter or storm drain.
- For oil-based products, use as much of the paint on the brushes as possible. Clean brushes with thinner. To reuse thinner, pour it through a fine filter (e.g. nylon, metal gauze or filter paper) to remove solids such as leftover traces of paint.
- For water-based products, use as much of the paint on the brushes as possible, then rinse in the sink.
- Collect all paint chips and dust. Chips and dust from marine paints or paints containing lead, mercury or tributyl tin are hazardous waste. Sweep up and dispose of at a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center (HHWCC).

## *Storing Paint*

- Store paint in a dry location away from the elements.
- Store leftover water-based paint, oil-based paint and solvents separately in original or clearly marked containers.
- Avoid storing paint cans directly on cement floors. The bottom of the can will rust much faster on cement.
- Place the lid on firmly and store the paint can upside-down to prevent air from entering. This will keep the paint usable longer. Oil-based paint is usable for up to 15 years. Water-based paint remains usable for up to 10 years.

## *Alternatives to Disposal*

- Use excess paint to apply another coat, for touch-ups, or to paint a closet, garage, basement or attic.
- Give extra paint to friends or family. Extra paint can also be donated to a local theatre group, low-income housing program or school.
- Take extra paint to an exchange program such as the “**Stop & Swap**” that allows you to drop off or pick up partially used home care products free of charge. “**Stop & Swap**” programs are available at most HHWCCs.
- For HHWCC locations and hours, call (714) 834-6752 or visit [www.oilandfills.com](http://www.oilandfills.com).



## *Disposing of Paint*

- Never put wet paint in the trash.

### *For water-based paint:*

- If possible, brush the leftover paint on cardboard or newspaper. Otherwise, allow the paint to dry in the can with the lid off in a well-ventilated area protected from the elements, children and pets. Stirring the paint every few days will speed up the drying.
- Large quantities of extra paint should be taken to a HHWCC.
- Once dried, paint and painted surfaces may be disposed of in the trash. When setting a dried paint can out for trash collection, leave the lid off so the collector will see that the paint has dried.

### *For oil-based paint:*

- Oil-based paint is a household hazardous waste. All leftover paint should be taken to a HHWCC.

### *Aerosol paint:*

- Dispose of aerosol paint cans at a HHWCC.

## *Spills*

- Never hose down pavement or other impermeable surfaces where paint has spilled.
- Clean up spills immediately by using an absorbent material such as cat litter. Cat litter used to clean water-based paint spills can be disposed of in the trash. When cleaning oil-based paint spills with cat litter, it must be taken to a HHWCC.
- Immediately report spills that have entered the street, gutter or storm drain to the County's 24-Hour Water Pollution Problem Reporting Hotline at (714) 567-6363 or visit [www.ocwatersheds.com](http://www.ocwatersheds.com) to fill out an incident reporting form.