



## YOUR HOME – PAINT DISPOSAL

Left-over paint is a common part of most painting projects and its disposal is usually thought of as an inconvenient task at the end of the job. In the past, tipping the paint down the laundry tub or into the drain in the street, even dispersed in the garden, were common solutions.

As awareness has grown of the need to reduce the flow of potentially toxic waste into our natural water systems and environment generally, these disposal methods have become unacceptable. A clean-out of the old shed also has its problems as many older paints contained heavy metals, lead and other hazardous materials, potentially toxic to both humans and our environment.

### WHAT IS A SOLUTION?

The first step is to look at reducing wasted paint in the first place, then following a few steps to dispose of the left-overs safely.

#### 1. Minimise potential waste before you start

Don't buy more than you need. Do an overall measure-up of the area to be painted and get advice from the paint supplier about how much you'll need. Tinting procedures mean you can easily buy some more.

#### 2. Use safe brush-cleaning methods

- Don't clean brushes under a running tap either inside or in the garden, as the toxins find their way to our soils and water-courses.
- Wash brushes in a labelled container and keep the liquid for a few days in a secure place. After a few days the solid particles will settle to the bottom.
- For water-based paints the liquid is then safe to dispose of in the garden and solids can be wrapped and placed in the household garbage. For oil-based paints, place in a secure container in a safe place and dispose of at a waste disposal facility. Do not use as a weed-killer!

#### 3. Using left over paint

- It is a good idea to keep a small amount of paint in a sealed can for later touch-ups. Rather than throwing away excess paint, consider getting your paint supplier to tint it to a different colour and use it to paint something else.
- To get rid of small amounts of acrylic paint which cannot be used, pour it onto absorbent material such as shredded paper or kitty litter, allow it to dry and dispose of in the garbage.

#### 4. Disposing of new and old paint containers and larger amounts of paint

- Oil based and old lead based paints are a problem. Any paint system that contains volatiles is a problem. Contact your local council for details of disposal centres. Many councils now make waste transfer facilities available or have collection services for toxic materials.
- If you have aerosol cans, empty these by spraying into an old cardboard box. Never attempt to puncture or incinerate them.
- Don't put any of these items in your household rubbish.

#### 5. The rule to remember

The rule to remember for clearing clutter in a house is usually, 'if in doubt, throw it out'.

When thinking of disposing of potentially hazardous waste, contact your local council first for advice about disposal services in your area.

**If you would like to talk to an Archicentre Australia architect about a particular matter, please call Archicentre Australia on 1300 13 45 13 or go to [www.archicentreaustralia.com.au](http://www.archicentreaustralia.com.au)**