

Iowa DNR/Household Hazardous Materials

Material: Latex Paint

Potential Hazards: Not considered hazardous.

Recycle/Reuse: If you have leftover latex paint in usable condition, check with neighbors, church groups or the local community to see if other residents can use it. If the paint is not contaminated or old, and has not been frozen or otherwise improperly stored, many RCCs operate swap shops where you may donate the latex paint for others to use.

Proper Disposal: Latex paint is not considered hazardous waste, and most RCCs charge a small disposal fee to dispose of it. You can dispose of latex safely at home by drying out the paint and then placing it in the garbage with the lid off. Latex paint can also be dried out by adding cat litter or sawdust to the can or by pouring it into a cardboard box containing cat litter/sawdust.

Residents can also mix latex paint with commercial paint hardener according to the directions. At the end of that time, paint will have a tacky, oatmeal-like consistency that will not spill out. For smaller amounts, paint on cardboard or newspaper and discard the newspaper/cardboard in the garbage when dry.

Green Alternatives: Latex is a good choice for painting as it cleans up with water and is considered to be non-hazardous. Look for paint low in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's). VOCs create the "new paint smell", which can pollute your indoor air quality and cause health problems. Remember to buy only the amount you need for the job so you don't have to store leftover paint. You can help keep paint from going bad by storing the can upside down, making sure the lid is on tightly. This creates an air-proof seal around the lid.