

TIPS for Minimizing Paint Waste

Many people find that properly managing paint waste is a hassle – so the cans keep accumulating. If you face this problem, try to: minimize the amount of leftover paint by knowing your coverage requirements ahead of time and buying only what you need, and correctly store your leftover paint so that it can be reused.

Buying the Right Amount of Paint

By purchasing only what you need, you will *save money* and *reduce the clutter* in your home or storage area.

Before going to the store, take a minute to quickly estimate how much paint you need. Just answer these few easy questions:

- How many coats of paint do I want to apply?
- For interior rooms, what are the floor dimensions and ceiling height?
- For exterior siding, what is the approximate wall height and width for each side of the structure?

Use these estimates to calculate the square footage of the entire area.

Generally, one gallon of paint covers 400 square feet with one coat; however, dry porous wall material might require more. So for example, if you estimate that you have a total of 400 square feet of wall space and you want to apply 2 coats of paint, you should buy 2 gallons of paint.

For a more accurate estimate, consider the number of windows and doors in the structure. Ask the store clerks for help, or check out:

- Benjamin Moore's paint calculator for interior rooms: www.benjaminmoore.com/en-us/for-your-home/paint-calculator.
- Lowes' paint calculator for interior and exterior jobs: www.lowes.com/cd_Paint+Calculator_953562246.

What NOT to Do with Leftover Latex Paint

Liquid latex paint that is thrown away in the trash or is poured down the drain can be released to the environment and cause contamination.

DO NOT:

- Throw containers with even small amounts of latex paint in the trash
- Pour leftover paint down the drain or sewer

Other Tips for Paint Purchasing

If you are trying a new color, test it out at home by purchasing a 4-ounce sample size. Then if you don't like how it looks, you won't have a whole gallon (or more) that you can't use.

Stores mix paint colors using standard formulas, so it is easy to buy more at a later date if necessary. Professional painters recommend having 1-quart of paint left over for touch-ups.

Look for recycled content paint, which is priced significantly lower than virgin paint and has the same quality. By using recycled content paint, you are preventing it from being landfilled and saving the resources needed to manufacture new paint.



Storing Leftover Paint So It Can Be Reused

In order for leftover paint to be useable at a later date, it needs to be stored so it doesn't have contact with air or go through a freeze/thaw cycle more than once or twice. Follow a few simple steps to keep leftover paint fresh and reusable:

- Do not store in unheated garages, attics, or outside storage sheds – these areas may experience freezing temperatures.
- Cover the opened can with plastic wrap before securely placing the lid back on, then store the can upside down.