

Metal Polish

Metal polishes are designed to remove soils, surface imperfections, and corrosion from metal surfaces. They come in a number of forms: aerosol sprays, liquids, pastes, and solids. Metal polishes may contain ammonia, denatured alcohol, naphtha, oxalic acid, petroleum distillates, phenolic derivatives, phosphoric acid, silica, sulfuric acid, thiourea, and tripolyphosphate. Ingredients in metal polishes are considered toxic, corrosive, flammable, poisonous, reactive with oxidizers, and an eye, skin, and mucous membrane irritant.

Source Reduction **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

While alternatives to commercial metal polishes that can be made at home exist, it is the policy of the Cooperative Extension Service and the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources not to make product recommendations. If you must use a metal polish, buy and use only as much as needed. When choosing a product, read the label and consider purchasing a product that lists “Caution” over “Warning”, over “Danger/Poison”. Danger/Poison denotes a more hazardous product than Caution.

Recycling/Reuse Options **TRY THIS NEXT**

Metal polish is not recyclable. Try to use the product up or find someone who will. Perhaps a custodial staff or a neighbor could use the product. The empty can may be recyclable. For more information on recycling the container, read the label or contact the local recycling center or manufacturer. Contact 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet for a list of recycling sites.

Disposal **LAST RESORT**

If the metal polish cannot be used up or given away, then read and follow the product’s label for the manufacturer’s instructions on proper disposal. Contact your local recycling coordinator to see if a HHW collection program is scheduled for your area. Their number can be accessed at 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet. Under state law, metal polish, if generated from household use, can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. Before attempting to dispose of metal polish in this manner, contact the local landfill to find out if they meet this requirement. If curbside waste pick-up is provided, contact the service provider to find out if the waste is being disposed of in a landfill which meets this requirement. To solidify the metal polish, mix the metal polish with enough absorbent material, such as cat-box filler, to absorb all free liquids or open the container in a well ventilated area and allow the contents to solidify. The solidified material may be disposed of in a landfill. The empty container should be recycled, if possible. Contact 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet for a list of recycling sites. If it cannot be recycled, then the empty container can be disposed of in a landfill.

Paint (Latex)

Latex paints are the most common type of household paint. According to the National Paint and Coatings Association, latex paint constitutes 80% of the consumer market.¹ Paint can be classified as latex if the label indicates that the paint can be cleaned up with soap and water. Latex paint may contain resins, ethylene glycol, esters, pigments (such as chromium) or (if old paint) lead. Some components of latex paint are considered toxic, flammable, poisonous, or a skin, eye, or mucous membrane irritant. Latex paint also may contain emulsifiers, thickeners, and defoamers which can be skin irritants. Latex paint manufactured before August 1990 may also contain mercury. Some older paints may contain high levels of lead, as well. Although the Consumer Products Safety Commission banned the use of lead in consumer paints in 1978, older homes, especially those built prior to 1978, may have lead-based paint on interior surfaces. According to EPA, lead-based paint dust and chips are dangerous if swallowed or inhaled, especially to small children and pregnant women.² For more information about lead-based paints or a list of businesses that can test homes to determine if a home has surfaces painted with lead-based paint, contact the National Lead Information Clearinghouse at (800) 424-LEAD, or the Lead/Asbestos Abatement Unit of the State of Georgia's Environmental Protection Division at (404) 363-7026.

Source Reduction **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

Alternatives to latex paint include limestone-based white wash, which is made up of hydrated lime, water, and salt and may not contain heavy metal pigments and alkyd resins. However, some white wash products may contain a mold inhibitor or other ingredients which may contain a heavy metal. Read the label to determine the ingredients of the selected white wash.

To minimize the quantity of paint that must be managed:

- buy only as much paint as needed; and
- store paint cans, with tightly secured lids, upside down to prevent the paint from drying out.

Recycling/Reuse Options **TRY THIS NEXT**

If the latex paint cannot be used, then contact a local high school drama department, charity, or church to see if they accept paint. An additional organization that may accept paint for reuse in Georgia, is the Atlanta Community Tool Bank at (404) 880-0054. However, some restrictions apply (e.g., certain groups may only accept full cans of paint). Latex paint can be recycled or rebled. Reblending is a process in which leftover paint is mixed with additives to form a new color. This is not a widespread practice due to a number of factors, including the resulting less consistent quality

¹ Cook, Kristina. National Paint & Coatings Association. Written Correspondence. November 1996.

² U.S. EPA. *Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home*.

of the paint, the muddy color, and concerns that the paint may be contaminated by chemicals, metals, or bacteria. Contact your local recycling coordinator to see if a HHW collection program is scheduled for your area. Their number can be accessed at 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet.

The empty steel can is recyclable; however, not every community accepts paint cans in their recycling program. Contact 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet for a list of recycling sites.

□ Disposal LAST RESORT

If the paint cannot be used up, given away, or recycled, then read and follow the product's label for the manufacturer's instructions on proper disposal.

Empty paint cans

The empty container should be recycled, if possible. If it cannot be recycled, then the empty container can be disposed of in a landfill.

Full cans of paint

Under state law, solidified latex paint can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. Before attempting to dispose of latex paint in this manner, contact the local landfill to determine if the landfill meets this requirement. If curbside waste pick-up is provided, contact the service provider to determine if the waste is being disposed of in a landfill which meets this requirement. To solidify full cans of latex paint, pour half the paint into a paper bag or box and mix with an absorbent material (i.e., cat-box filler, shredded newspaper, or sawdust) to absorb all free liquids and allow the mixture to harden. Place the box or bag with solidified latex paint in the landfill. Mix absorbent material with the remaining paint left in the can to absorb all free liquids and allow the mixture to harden. Then discard the can in the landfill.

Partially full cans of paint

To solidify cans that are less than half full, pour enough absorbent material into the can to absorb all free liquids. The can of solidified paint may then be disposed of in the landfill. Before attempting to dispose of latex paint in landfill, contact the local landfill or the service provider to determine if the waste is being disposed of in a Subtitle D landfill. Under state law, solidified latex paint can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill.

Small quantities of latex paint (i.e., paint in paint brushes) can be poured slowly down an inside drain with a large amount of additional water. However, paint should not be poured down an inside drain if connected to a septic system.

Latex paint should not be poured down outside drains, into a storm sewer, or on the ground. This can cause ground water contamination and/or operational problems with the septic system or POTW.

Dry and harden the latex paint and paint cans in a well ventilated area, away from children and pets.

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Paint (Solvent-based)

Solvent-based, also called oil-based or alkyd paints contain organic solvents. Examples of this type of paint include enamels, varnishes, and lacquers. Paint is considered solvent-based if the label indicates that cleanup requires paint thinner or mineral spirits. Ingredients in solvent-based paint may include pigments, alkyl resin, ethylene glycol, kerosene, lead, mercury, methylene chloride, methyl ethyl ketone, mineral spirits, titanium dioxide, toluene, trichloroethane, or xylene. Some components of solvent-based paint are considered flammable, toxic, poisonous, and an irritant to skin, eyes, and mucous membranes. Some older paints, manufactured before 1978, may contain high levels of lead. Refer to the latex paint section for more information about lead-based paint.

Source Reduction **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

Alternatives to solvent-based paint include:

- latex (water-based paint); and
- new, less volatile paints that contain less ethylene glycol and other petroleum-based solvents.

In order to minimize the amount of solvent-based paint that must be managed:

- buy only as much paint as needed, and
- store paint cans, with tightly secured lids, upside down to prevent the paint from drying out.

Recycling/Reuse Options **TRY THIS NEXT**

If the solvent-based paint cannot be used, then contact a local high school drama department, charity, or church to see if they accept paint. An additional organization that may accept paint for reuse in Georgia, is the Atlanta Community Tool Bank at (404) 880-0054. However, some restrictions apply (e.g., certain groups may only accept full cans of paint). Contact your local recycling coordinator to see if there is a HHW collection program scheduled in your area. Their number can be accessed at 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet. There is some limited recycling of solvent-based paint. The empty steel can is recyclable; however, not every community accepts paint cans in their recycling program. Contact the local recycling coordinator or 1-800-CLEANUP (on the web at www.1800cleanup.org) for information on recycling steel cans.

Disposal **LAST RESORT**

If the paint cannot be used up, given away, or recycled, then read and follow the label for the manufacturer's instructions on proper disposal.

Empty paint cans

The empty container should be recycled, if possible. If it cannot be recycled, then the empty container

can be disposed of in a landfill.

Full cans of paint

Under state law, if generated from household use, solidified solvent-based paint can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. Before attempting to dispose of solvent-based paint in this manner, contact the local landfill to determine if the landfill meets this requirement. If curbside waste pick-up is provided, contact the service provider to determine if the waste is being disposed of in a landfill which meets this requirement. To solidify full cans of solvent-based paint, pour half the paint into a paper bag or box and mix with an absorbent material (i.e., cat-box filler, shredded newspaper, or sawdust) to absorb all free liquids and allow the mixture to harden. Place the box or bag with solidified solvent-based paint in the landfill. Mix absorbent material with the remaining paint left in the can to absorb all free liquids and allow the mixture to harden. Then discard the can in the landfill.

Partially full cans of paint

To solidify cans that are less than half full, pour enough absorbent material into the can to absorb all free liquids. The can of solidified paint may then be disposed of in the landfill. Before attempting to dispose of solvent-based paint in landfill, contact the local landfill or the service provider to determine if the waste is being disposed of in a Subtitle D landfill. Under state law, solidified solvent-based paint can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill.

Solvent-based paint should not be poured down drains (inside or outside), into a storm sewer, or on the ground. This can cause ground water contamination and/or operational problems with the septic system or POTW.

Solvent-based paint should be dried and allowed to harden in a well ventilated area, away from children and pets.

Paint Strippers

Paint strippers may be either solvent, water, or alkali-based. Solvent-based paint strippers may contain acetone, benzene, carbon tetrachloride, methanol, methylene chloride, phenols, and toluene. Water-based strippers may contain aliphatic petroleum distillates, dibasic esters (e.g. , dimethyl adipate ester), n-methyl-2-pyrrolidone (NMP), propanoic acid, and propylene carbonate. Caustic or alkali-based strippers may contain sodium hydroxide (lye). Some ingredients in solvent-based strippers are considered flammable, toxic, poisonous, and irritants. Water-based strippers may contain ingredients that are considered toxic or an irritant. Some ingredients in alkali-based products are considered corrosive, toxic, poisonous, and an irritant.

Source Reduction **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

Non-chemical alternatives to paint strippers include using:

- sandpaper;
- scraper;
- rasp;
- abrasive block; or a
- heat gun.

If you must use paint thinner, buy and use only as much as needed. Purchase water or alkali-based strippers or a paint stripper that does not contain methylene chloride. When choosing a product, read the label and consider purchasing a product that lists “Caution” over “Warning”, over “Danger/Poison”. Danger/Poison denotes a more hazardous property than Caution. To avoid having to buy more paint stripper, store the container with the lid tightly secured.

Recycling/Reuse Options **TRY THIS NEXT**

If the paint stripper cannot be used, then try to give it to someone who can. Paint strippers are not recyclable. The empty, rinsed container may be recyclable. For more information on recycling, read the label or contact the manufacturer or the local recycling center.

Disposal **LAST RESORT**

If the stripper cannot be used up or given away, then read and follow the product’s label for the manufacturer’s instructions on proper disposal. Contact the local recycling coordinator to see if a HHW collection program is scheduled in your area. Their number can be accessed at 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet. Under state law, if generated by household use, solidified paint strippers can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. To solidify the paint stripper, mix the paint stripper with enough absorbent material, such as sawdust, to absorb all free liquids. Then place the solidified material in the landfill. Paint strippers containing lye (sodium hydroxide) may be poured down the drain with a large amount of water. Before disposing of the stripper down the drain, check with the local wastewater treatment plant. The rinsed, empty container should be recycled, if possible. Contact 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet for a list of recycling sites. If it cannot be recycled, then the empty container can be disposed of in a landfill.

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Paint strippers should not be poured down a septic tank, into inside or outside drains, into a storm sewer, or on the ground. This can cause ground water contamination and/or operational problems with the septic system or POTW. Never use gasoline, lighter fluid, or kerosene to strip paint.

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Paint Thinner

Paint thinners are used to thin paint and clean brushes. Ingredients in paint thinners include acetone, methanol, naphthalene, toluene, turpentine, or xylene. Some ingredients in paint thinners are considered toxic, flammable, poisonous, and an eye and skin irritant.

Source Reduction **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

There are no less toxic alternatives to paint thinner to thin solvent-based paints. However, to avoid using paint thinners, use water-based or latex paints. To avoid having to buy more paint thinner, store the container with the lid tightly secured.

Recycling/Reuse Options **TRY THIS NEXT**

Paint thinner can be reused. Leave the used paint thinner in a closed container until the paint particles settle to the bottom. The clear liquid on top can then be poured into a clean container and reused. Attach the original label to the new container. A mesh screen placed on top of the new container can also be used to filter the contaminants as the thinner is poured into the new container. The empty steel can is recyclable; however, not every community accepts this type of can in their recycling program. Contact the local recycling center for information on recycling steel cans, or contact 1-800-CLEANUP (on the web at www.1800cleanup.org).

Disposal **LAST RESORT**

If the paint thinner cannot be used up, given away or reused, then read and follow the product's label for the manufacturer's instructions on proper disposal. Contact your local recycling coordinator to see if a HHW collection program is scheduled for your area. Under state law, if generated by household use, solidified paint thinner can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. To absorb the paint thinner or the cloudy material on the bottom of the container that is left after the reuse process outlined above, mix the product with enough absorbent material (e.g., newspaper, sawdust) to absorb all free liquids or open the container in a well ventilated area and allow the contents to solidify. Place the material in a plastic bag and dispose of in a landfill. The empty container should be recycled, if possible. Contact 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet for a list of recycling sites. If it cannot be recycled, then the empty container can be disposed of in a landfill.

Paint thinner should not be poured down a drain (inside or outside), into a storm sewer, or on the ground. Great care should be used when storing and handling paint thinner. Keep paint thinner away from an open flame and other heat sources. Store flammable liquids in a tightly closed, non-glass container. Store out of reach of children. Do not store flammable materials inside the home.

Wood Polishes and Waxes

Wood polishes and waxes are used to protect and polish wood finishes. Ingredients in wood polishes and waxes include ammonia, aromatic solvents (e.g., benzene, toluene), petroleum distillates (also called naphtha), mineral spirits, silicones, trichloroethane, or turpentine. Some components of wood polishes and waxes are flammable, toxic, poisonous, and an eye and skin irritant.

Source Reduction **PREVENTS THE NEED FOR DISPOSAL**

There are alternatives to wood polish and waxes. These include: using polishes made with mineral oil and citrus oil; and for unvarnished wood, using vegetable or mineral oil. When choosing a product, read the label and consider purchasing a product that lists “Caution” over “Warning”, over “Danger/Poison”. Danger/Poison denotes a more hazardous property than Caution.

Recycling/Reuse Options **TRY THIS NEXT**

Wood polishes and waxes are not recyclable. The empty steel can is recyclable; however, not every community accepts this type of can in their recycling program. Contact the local recycling center for information on recycling the container. In addition, 1-800-CLEANUP (on the web at www.1800cleanup.org) can provide the nearest location to recycle steel cans.

Disposal **LAST RESORT**

If the wood polish and wax cannot be used up or given away, then read and follow the product’s label for the manufacturer’s instructions on proper disposal. Contact your local recycling coordinator to see if a HHW collection program is scheduled for your area. Their number can be accessed at 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet. Under state law, if generated by household use, solidified wood polish and wax can be legally disposed of in a permitted, Subtitle D landfill. To solidify wood polish or wax, mix it with enough absorbent material such as sawdust to absorb all free liquids or open the container in a well ventilated area and allow the contents to solidify. The solidified material may be disposed of in a landfill. The empty container should be recycled, if possible. Contact 1-800-CLEANUP or www.1800cleanup.org on the Internet for a list of recycling sites. If it cannot be recycled, then the empty container can be disposed of in a landfill.

Wood polishes and waxes should not be poured down drains (inside or outside), into a storm sewer, or on the ground.