

Community Partners for Clean Streams Monthly eMonitor



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*A Publication of the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's Office
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In This Month's eMonitor

Up Front:	Welcome to the Community Partners Monthly eMonitor
Topic of the Month:	Proper Paint Prep
Tip of the Month:	Proper Paint Disposal
CPCS News:	New and Renewing Partners
CPCS Events:	Environmental Excellence Awards

Up Front

The eMonitor is designed to keep our Partners and friends updated on CPCS, stormwater management issues, provide helpful information to reduce stormwater and nonpoint source pollution, recognize new Partners, highlight upcoming events, and create networking opportunities. We hope you enjoy each edition of the Monthly eMonitor and welcome any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

Paint Prep and Disposal



Summer and fall are times when construction and remodeling projects are typically in full swing. Whether at your place of business or at home, there are many improvement projects that include painting on a fairly recurring basis. Because of this, there always seems to be a pile of paint cans and materials in the storage area of every business and home! Left over paint can often be reused for regular touch-ups, but sometimes it is no longer needed or was stored improperly and no longer viable. It is important to also consider environmental and water quality issues when preparing, painting, storing and disposing of these materials. Please remember to discuss proper paint disposal issues with your painting contractor.

Often times, we do not know how to store and/or dispose of paint and related materials at our business site or at home, so left over paint is relegated to a storage area and forgotten. It is important to store these products properly so that they can be reused in the future. If it is necessary to dispose of the products there are safe ways to do so without harming water quality. Reusable paint that you can no longer use can be donated, but sometimes the products are too old or compromised and must be disposed of. This issue of the eMonitor focuses on the proper ways to prepare, use, store and dispose of paint and paint products to protect water quality, human health and the environment.

Paint Prep

Preparing the area for painting is oftentimes the most time consuming step in the process. It is also very important to purchase the proper amount of paint and prepare the surface. Here are some tips:

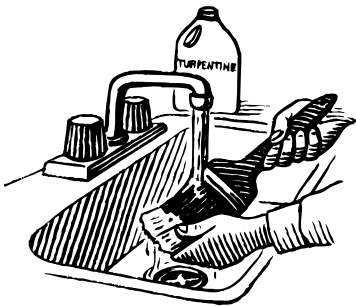
- Carefully measure the area to be painted, and purchase the appropriate amount of paint. Most interior surfaces require two coats, so remember to factor in additional coats when purchasing. Representatives at the retail outlet where you purchase the paint will be able to help you determine the proper amount.
- Clean the area to be painted carefully. Take extra precautions if you suspect the area has lead-based paint on the surface. Use a drop cloth to collect paint chips and dispose of properly.
- If painting an exterior surface, avoid power washing in areas that wash directly into a storm drain.
- Tape and cover anything you do not want painted. This will avoid the need to use paint removers at a later date.
- Open paint cans with the proper opener, this will preserve the integrity of the lid and allow for a better seal when storing leftovers.



Paint Clean Up

When cleaning up your painting gear and work area, be sure to *protect the premises*.

- “Brush off” as much paint as possible onto the painted surface to avoid the need for washing excess material off the brushes.
- When using oil based paints, avoid using solvents for clean up; use disposable pans and covers instead.
- If using solvents is unavoidable, use a separate pan for cleaning with solvents. Do not pour solvents down the drain. The solvents can be re-used once the paint particles have settled out. Used solvent can be brought to the Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Site (see next page).
- Never pour excess paint or wash water from brushes and pans down a storm drain. Throw disposable items in the trash and wash reusable ones in a sink connected to the sanitary sewer.
- Contain paint spills with absorbent materials and dispose of in the trash.



Paint Storage

Storing paint properly is an important aspect of the process to ensure it can be reused at a later date. There are a few quick and easy steps that can be taken to store your paint in such a manner that it can be re-used for years to come. Follow the steps below for safe and easy long term paint storage.

- Wipe the lip of the paint can to remove any excess paint in the grooves for a tighter seal.
- Place a piece of plastic wrap over the top of the can, then replace the lid and secure with a rubber mallet. This will help keep the paint fresh.
- Store the paint can upside down. This creates a tight seal that will also help keep the paint fresh for years to come.
- Consider placing a small quantity of paint in a separate jar for re-touching, avoiding the need to re-open the whole can.
- Store in an area that is free from extreme temperatures. Very high or freezing temperatures can compromise the quality of the paint rendering it useless.

Paint Disposal

Most everyone has a stack of old paint cans collecting dust in their basement, storage area or garage. It is important to know how to dispose of these stockpiles properly so as to not contaminate local water ways or otherwise damage the environment with this common pollutant.

Often times, paint that you are no longer interested in storing can be used by someone else. There are many charitable organizations such as schools, theatre departments and community centers that accept donations of usable paint and primer for their projects and locations. That avocado green that seemed like such a good idea five years ago may be welcome in a local theatre production!

Paint does have a shelf life however, and if it is stored improperly it will become unusable much more quickly. Oil based paints last for years when stored properly and away from the elements and extreme temperature fluctuations. The tips below will help you determine to best way to dispose of leftover, unusable paint in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

Unusable Latex and Water Based Paints

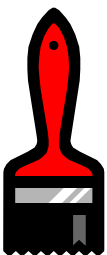
- Pour the paint into a paper bag containing saw dust, kitty litter or shredded paper. Once the paint has dried, it can be disposed of in the trash.
- Latex paint can also be poured on a plastic sheet lined box or container until dry, then disposed on in the trash.
- Always dry paint in a well ventilated area away from children and pets.
- If there is a small amount of paint left in the can (less than $\frac{1}{4}$) it can simply be left in the open until it is dry, then placed in the trash. It should dry out in a few days.
- Some communities will recycle empty paint cans and aerosol containers, check with your local community.



Unusable Oil Based Paint Disposal

- Oil based paints are a household hazardous waste and should be treated with care. Never pour down a storm drain, or place directly in the trash.
- Dispose of these types paints as well as paint thinners and removers at the Washtenaw County Home Toxics Reduction Program Drop Off Site, located at the Washtenaw County Western Services Center, 705 N. Zeeb Road in Scio Township. Call 734-222-3950 for drop off times and other details.

Protect the Premises



Community Partners for Clean Streams has developed a brochure called “Protect the Premises: CPCS’ Guide to Proper Paint Disposal for Contractors and Residents”. It is currently in production and will be available for distribution soon. It includes the information available in this issue of the eMonitor as well as information on donating paint to local charities and much more.

An announcement of its arrival will be noted in the eMonitor, so please stay tuned!

[CPCS News](#)

New and Renewing Partners

We would like to welcome and thank our new and renewing Community Partners for this month. Thank you for your continuing commitment to water quality!

New Partner: Angel Food Catering



Upcoming Community Partner Events

2006 Environmental Excellence Awards will be held at the Board of Commissioners Meeting on Wednesday, September 20, 2006. Keep an eye on upcoming eMonitors for profiles of this year's winners!

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