

Painting Without Pollution

Information Sheet

Preventing Stormwater Pollution

When rainwater travels over our driveways, roads and parking lots, the water picks up chemicals, metals, sediment and oils and conveys them to our creeks, rivers and the ocean. This pollution harms fish and other marine species. By reducing pollution in our watersheds we can enjoy clean, healthy, natural spaces.

Painting and paint removal can cause pollution in a number of ways. All paints, solvents and adhesives contain chemicals that are harmful to aquatic life in our waterways. By using best management practices for painting, we can help to prevent pollution and protect water quality and our environment.



Painting Preparation

- Plan ahead. Calculate the amount of paint required for the job. Buy only what you need. This will save you money and you won't have to deal with leftovers.
- Use water-based paints whenever possible. Look for the words latex" or "clean up with water" on the label.
- Determine whether the waste you generate will be hazardous and plan for disposal (*see Waste Management*).
- Prepare exterior painting surfaces without generating wastewater, for example, by sandblasting or wet scraping.
- Use sandpaper, a heat gun, and good old fashioned elbow grease for paint stripping.
- Use citrus-based paint removers whenever possible. They are less toxic than chemical strippers, which are considered hazardous.



- If you are stripping or cleaning building exteriors with high pressure water, install a curb, dyke or berm around the activity area to prevent stormwater run-off. Direct the wash water onto a landscaped area. Avoid working in windy conditions.

Painting and Clean-Up

- Use drip pans and drop cloths in mixing and painting areas.
- Store latex paint rollers and brushes in a tightly wrapped plastic bag in the freezer and reuse them on the next coat of the same colour.
- Have absorbent materials readily available for paint spills.
- Paint-out brushes as much as you can. Squeeze paint from brushes and rollers back into the container before cleaning them.
- Pour excess paint from trays and buckets back into the paint can. Wipe containers clean with a cloth or paper towel. Dispose of dried wipes in the garbage.
- Rinse water-based paint brushes in the sink after pre-cleaning. Never pour excess paint or wastewater from clean-up of latex paint in the storm drain.
- Clean oil-based brushes with paint thinner. Never clean oil-based brushes in a sink or over a storm drain. Filter the solvent and reuse if possible (*see Waste Management*).

Waste Management

- Avoid using acidic, caustic and hazardous substances.
- Reuse leftover paint or give it to someone else who can use it.
- Reuse solvent. Pour the solvent into a glass or metal container and allow the solids to separate out. Skim off any paint residue; wrap it in paper and dispose of it in the garbage. Save cleaned solvent for your next project. Consider using different containers for the initial and final cleaning.
- Recycle unwanted paint and empty paint cans at local recycling depots.
- Return products in their original, labeled containers with lids securely fastened.
- Do not mix paint with any other product to ensure it can be recycled.
- Drop off household hazardous waste (HHW) materials such as paint removal abrasives and chemical paint stripping residue, liquid residues from paints, thinners, solvents, glues and cleaning fluids, lead-based paint dust, chips and paint water at the Hartland Depot.
- Dispose of non-HHW materials such as dry sweep paint chips and dust from non-hazardous dry stripping and sandblasting, used brushes, dry rags and drop cloths in the regular garbage.
- Contact the CRD Infoline for more information on disposal options: infoline@crd.bc.ca, **250.360.3030** and visit www.crd.bc.ca/hhw.

Storage, Spill Prevention and Response

- Keep paint and solvent containers closed when not in use. Protect them from exposure to rainfall.
- Keep paint and paint-related products contained. Monitor the storage containers or containment areas on a regular basis. A sheen or discolouration of any pooled wastewater indicates potential contamination.
- Whenever possible, use dry methods to clean up spills, such as sweeping, vacuuming, mopping or using absorbents.
- Manage spilled hazardous materials such as cleaning solvents as hazardous waste (*see Waste Management*).
- Report spill incidents immediately to your municipality or the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) at 1-800-663-3456.



Storm drains vs. Sanitary Sewers

Storm drains are typically found in streets and parking lots to collect stormwater. Stormwater is surface water that includes water from rain, snowmelt and irrigation. As the water runs across rooftops, lawns, pavement and other surfaces it picks up contaminants like litter, fluid leaks from cars, pesticides used on lawns, and spilled paints or solvents. Most stormwater ends up untreated in our nearby waterways, creeks, rivers and the ocean.

Sanitary sewers collect wastewater from indoor plumbing such as toilets, sinks, washing machines and floor drains. The sewage flows to a treatment plant before it is discharged to the ocean.

Quick Tips

1. Check where storm and sewer drains are located.
2. Determine how you will deal with your waste before you start the job.
3. Stock up on absorbent materials and other clean-up items.
4. Keep all liquid paint products and wastes away from storm drains and sanitary sewers.
5. Never pour excess paint on the ground or down storm or sewer drains.
6. Use appropriate clean-up procedures for water-based and oil-based paints.
7. Reduce use of hazardous materials and replace them with non-toxic alternatives.
8. Reuse leftover paints whenever possible.
9. Recycle unwanted paints at a local recycling depot.
10. Identify waste storage areas.
11. Report spills to your municipality or to the Provincial Emergency Program: 1.800.663.3456.

To learn more about living green and protecting the environment at home, visit www.crd.bc.ca/cleanwater

July 2022

Capital Regional District
Environmental Protection
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7