

Most paint has four components:

The resin is the main part of the paint which forms a film on the surface. It is typically a non-hazardous component like linseed or acrylic.

Solvent keeps the paint a liquid until the solvent evaporates after painting. In oil-based paint, the solvent is derived from a petroleum distillate and can include hazardous ingredients like mineral spirits, toluene and xylene. The solvent in latex paint is water.

Pigments provide the color and covering power. The major pigments used presently are relatively nontoxic. Some highly colored pigments may contain heavy metals such as chromium, cadmium or arsenic. Older paints may contain lead.

Paint may also have additives. Some types of additives include stabilizers, dryers, thickeners and preservatives. Some latex paints contain a mercury-based fungicide preservative.

Tips For Using Paint

Avoid having leftover paint by buying only the amount you need for the job. Use up any leftover paint. If you cannot use it up, see if a friend or neighbor is willing to use it.

If paint is unusable, dispose of it properly. Never put liquid paint in the trash or pour it in a drain or storm drain. Small amount of paint can be solidified. If you choose to solidify paint, be sure to do so in a well ventilated area. Make sure there are no possible sources of spark or fire and wear protective gloves.

To solidify small quantities, such as an inch or two in the bottom of a can, simply remove the lid, add non-flammable absorbent and stir until all the liquid is absorbed. Then the paint is solidified, place the absorbent and paint cans inside a garbage bag, seal the bag tightly and dispose of it in the trash can.

Source: Missouri University Extension

