

SOLVENTS

WHAT ARE SOLVENTS?

Solvents are chemicals that dissolve other substances. They are used to thin paint, clean paint brushes, remove nail polish, clean machinery, remove grease stains and strip paint.

WHY ARE SOLVENTS A HAZARD?

Household solvents contain the same chemicals as strictly regulated industrial solvents. Many solvents are poisonous when swallowed or absorbed through the skin and lungs and most are flammable.

When solvents are disposed of improperly - in the garbage, on the ground or down the drain - the hazardous chemicals may contaminate lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater. Many chemicals found in landfills may contaminate the underground water table, but solvents are a primary concern.

COMMON HOUSEHOLD SOLVENTS	
Solvent Name	Ingredients
Paint Thinners	toluene, xylene, mineral spirits, turpentine, petroleum distillates
Paint Strippers	methylene chloride, acetone, trichloroethylene, toluene, xylene
Septic Tank Cleaners	methylene chloride, trichloroethylene
Degreasers	trichloroethylene, mineral spirits, methylene chloride, carbon tetrachloride, stoddard solvents
Spot Removers	trichloroethylene, naptha, benzene, toluene, perchloroethylene
Nail Polish Removers	acetone, ethyl acetate
Paint Removers	toluene, xylene, naptha
Rubbing, Wood Alcohol	isopropanol, methanol
Gas-line Deicers	methanol, isopropanol

HOW CAN I DISPOSE OF LEFTOVER SOLVENTS?

Use them up or store them for later use. Be sure to follow safety instructions. If you cannot use your solvents, give them to someone who can.

Give leftover solvents to:

- friends, relatives, neighbours
- Graphic arts businesses
- Auto shops and spray painters
- Artists
- furniture and antique refinishing shops
- painting contractors

SOLVENT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS
Work in a well ventilated area away from children and pets.
Solvents are flammable: work away from sparks, heat and flames.
Never smoke while handling solvents.
Wear protective clothing if suggested by the product label.
Avoid breathing solvent fumes, especially aerosol fumes.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH SOLVENT THAT IS DIRTY WITH PAINT?

Solvents such as paint thinner that has been used to clean up painting supplies can be easily cleaned and reused. Follow the instructions below:

- Follow the safety instructions listed on the container.
- Pour the dirty solvent into a transparent container with a good seal and store it until the paint settles to the bottom. This may take several weeks to several months.
- Carefully pour the clean solvent off the top. This solvent can be reused.
- Allow the remaining paint sludge to dry completely and place it in a plastic bag in the red top garbage bin.

WHAT IF I CAN'T FIND A WAY TO USE LEFTOVER SOLVENT?

Disposal methods for solvents depend on the type and quantity of solvent you have. Follow the disposal instructions listed on its container for your specific solvent.

You can also take your leftover solvents to the Household Chemical Cleanout Collection which is held in the Shire yearly.

Store the solvent in its original labelled container away from pets and children until this collection. Call the organisations listed at the end of the sheet for more information.

HOW CAN I AVOID FUTURE SOLVENT DISPOSAL PROBLEMS?

Be a careful consumer and store solvents carefully.

- Make sure the solvent is needed for your project before you buy it. Some non-hazardous alternatives are available.
- Buy only the amount you need.
- Avoid purchasing solvents in aerosol containers.
- Use up leftover solvents before you buy more.
- Do not mix solvents together or with other products.
- Store leftover solvents carefully in original containers for future use. If stored properly, solvents should stay in good condition for years.
- Instead of saving leftover solvents, dispose of them as they are generated. Solvents are easier to dispose of in small quantities.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT HAZARDOUS WASTE, CONTACT:

- Eurobodalla Shire Council's Waste Minimisation Officer on 4474 1029
- Department of Environment and Climate Change on 131555

