



*Clean Water begins at home!*

## Home Improvement

Home improvement projects require special care to prevent water quality problems. Paint use, paint removal, and driveway, walkway, and patio installation and repair are just some of the activities in which the household hazardous materials used can negatively affect streams, aquatic organisms, and surrounding wildlife.

Here are some guidelines to follow:

### PAINTING & PAINT REMOVAL

- Water-based paints are generally less toxic than oil-based paints. To identify these, look for *latex, low-VOC paint, solvent-free*, or clean-up instructions with water rather than paint thinner.
- Buy only what you are going to use.
- Don't use paints manufactured prior to 1977. They may contain toxic levels of lead. Take old or unwanted paint to a household hazardous waste collection site for disposal. Please call (360) 397-2121 ext. 4352 for information on locations and times.
- After getting as much water-based paint off brushes and paint trays as possible, wash off the excess paint in an indoor sink rather than outdoors.
- After they are thoroughly dry, dispose of empty paint cans, used brushes, rags, and drop cloths in your garbage.
- Dispose of empty aerosol paint cans in the garbage, taking unwanted leftover paint cans to collection.



- When pressure-washing exterior house paint, keep wash water from discharging into a storm drain. Divert it onto grass and use a wet-vacuum to pick up paint chips.
- Chemical paint-stripping residue, including saturated rags, is a hazardous waste and should be taken to a household hazardous waste collection site.
- Lead paint chips are a hazardous waste and should be swept up, bagged, and taken to a local household hazardous waste collection site.
- Reuse paint thinner and cleaning solvents. Set aside in a closed, labeled jar to settle out paint particles, then pour off clear liquid for future use. Dispose of paint and thinner residue at a household hazardous waste collection site.
- Save unused paint for future paint jobs or find someone who can use it. Donate it to an organization that needs contributions or recycle it at a household hazardous waste collection facility.



## DRIVEWAYS, WALKWAYS, & PATIOS

- Set up and operate small mixers on heavy tarps or drop cloths.
- Never wash excess material from bricklaying or patio or driveway construction into a storm drain.
- Collect and reuse excess gravel and sand.
- Don't use your hose as a broom. Never hose down driveways, sidewalks, or streets into storm drains.
- Apply driveway sealant when no rain is forecast. Sweep first to prepare for application and follow directions carefully.
- When landscaping, try to minimize the use of impervious surfaces and slope such surfaces toward vegetated areas (see Landscaping fact sheet).

Visit [www.RecyclingA-Z.com](http://www.RecyclingA-Z.com) for disposal information.



For more information, please call the Clark County Clean Water Program at (360) 397-2121 ext. 4345 or visit [www.clark.wa.gov/water-resources](http://www.clark.wa.gov/water-resources).



For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office: **Voice** (360) 397-2322; **Relay** 711 or (800) 833-6388; **Fax** (360) 397-6165; **E-mail** ADA@clark.wa.gov.