

How to clean brushes and rollers without polluting the environment

An easy to use cleaning system

This system is based on the use of two containers in which brushers, roller sleeves and other equipment are first washed and then rinsed. By rotating the containers the solids in the paint are separated from the liquid making it easier to dispose of each component.

This system will work well for both waterborne and solvent borne (oil or alkyd) paints. For solvent borne paints use mineral turpentine and any other paint solvent recommended by your local Impa Colour Shop or Reseller.

Follow these steps:

In the case of waterborne paints:

- At the end of the job wipe or squeeze excess paint onto an absorbent material, such as old rags, shredded newspaper or cardboard boxes.
- Allow to dry and dispose of with household waste.
- Wash brushes, rollers and other equipment with water in a large pail.
- The most effective method is to use a roller spinner.
- Transfer the washed equipment to a second container filled with clean water for a final rinse
- Place lids on the containers or cover in some other secure manner and allow to stand overnight

By morning the paint solids in the first container will have settled down to the bottom of the container. The clear water from this container may now be poured onto the garden or any grassed or open area away from streams, rivers or lakes, where it can be absorbed into the ground.

Now to dispose of the paint solids at the bottom of the first container.

Scrape the paint solids out onto absorbent material, such as old rags, shredded newspapers or cardboard boxes. Allow to dry then place in a plastic bag and dispose of with the household rubbish or take directly to the nearest council tip.

The second container now can be used as the first wash. Use this rotation system until the job is completed.

In the case of solvent borne paints, follow the same procedures as for waterborne paints but with these exceptions:

- Use solvents to wash equipment
- Allow the first container to stand at least 24 hours as it will take this long for the paint solids to settle
- Do not pour the clear solvent onto the ground – use it to top up the second container or decant and keep for future use.
- Use the least amount of solvent

Caution

Never allow waste water or chemical solvents from washed paint equipment to enter household or storm water drains or sewers. The waste may find its way into natural waterways where it can reduce oxygen levels and threaten the survival of fish and other aquatic organisms.

Planning ahead

It's a good idea to keep container of "dirty turps" on hand for cleaning purposes. Kept in the original container and in a safe place, you will be able to reuse the solvent time and time again. Remember not to shake it up as this will disturb the paint solids, which will have settled to the bottom of the container.

Tips for dealing with spills

If paint is accidentally spilt, clean it up as best as you can with a cloth or newspaper. Then treat with Impa Emulsifiable Solvent Cleaner and rinse with water by treating the spilt paint with Emulsifiable Solvent Cleaner before washing down you will save solvent and give yourself less work to do.

When moving from one worksite to another

A plastic pail with a tight lid is ideal for the short term storage and transport of brushes and roller sleeves. Fill this pail about halfway with water so that brushes etc are covered. This will save you from having to clean brushes and rollers whenever work is interrupted.

Wrapping a paintbrush in cling wrap will prevent the paint drying on the brush while you take a lunch break. Similarly put your roller into a plastic bag and tape it around the handle or submerge the roller in the paint in your break.