



EPP Rapid Research

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EPP Rapid Research **Recycled vs. Low VOC Paints** **City of Seattle, WA**

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Request:

(Nancy Locke, Purchasing Services Manager, City of Seattle)

Latex paint- recycled vs. low VOC paints. Which one is more “friendly”? Is it possible to identify a preferred paint that shares best characteristics of both?

Key Findings:

Definitions:

- Consolidated paint- consists of 95-100% **post consumer** content (unused paint collected from homes or businesses that would otherwise be wasted and land filled).
- Re-processed paint- includes at least 50% **post consumer** content blended with **virgin paint, other raw materials or post-industrial paint** (overages from the manufacturing process).

Recycled paint that is “consolidated” is the best alternative since all of the impacts associated with manufacturing new paint have already been realized. Recycled paint contributes no new VOC’s, pollutants or impacts from mining. Little additional electricity or water is required to re-condense paint into a “new” product. The impacts of manufacturing new paint include:

- Approximately 100-kilowatt hours of energy per gallon¹
- Raw materials and impacts from petroleum and titanium dioxide mining
- Water pollution
- Air pollution

Recycling used paint reduces government costs.

- Leftover latex paint is a disposal problem for local governments. It is one of the largest-volume items collected by city and county household hazardous waste (HHW) programs.
- Leftover paint is typically still a usable product. Recycling this paint locally is cheaper than shipping it off for disposal as a hazardous waste.
- In manufacturing, using post-consumer paint reduces the energy consumption and pollution of paint production. It also diverts a usable product from the waste stream.
- The cost for a municipality to get rid of unused paint is estimated at \$7-8 per gallon².

¹ Jim Quinn, Metro Regional Government Solid Waste, Portland, OR

² David Nightengale, Washington Department of Ecology and Northwest Representative of the National Paint Initiative

- Recycled latex paint is up to 50% cheaper than non-recycled paint.
- By supporting local recyclers and recycled paint manufacturers, you ensure that this market will be available as a low-cost disposal option.³

When is Low VOC paint a better choice?

Choosing a low VOC paint may be a better choice **if** a building will be occupied before the paint has dried, or if the inhabitants are chemically sensitive people who will be in the building while the VOC's are escaping into the air. However, in terms of overall environmental impacts, recycled paint (consolidated) paint is the best environmental choice.

Recycled Paint Manufacturers:

Amazon Paint

- Close to 100% post consumer content
- 6 Colors
- Manufactured in California and Minnesota
- General Pricing: \$7-\$14/gallon

<http://www.nvo.com/amazon/door/>

Calibre Environmental Paint Recycling

- 100% post consumer content
- 14 colors
- Manufactured in Calgary, Alberta
- \$10/gallon (Canadian)

<http://www.calibreenvironmental.com/index.html>

GSA Hardware Superstore

- A minimum of 50% post consumer waste
- 16 colors
- Shipped direct from vendor
- Maximum VOC 200 g/l.

800-488-3111

Kelly Moore "E-Coat"

- A minimum of 50% post consumer content
- No black or pure white, but other colors can usually be mixed successfully
- Shipped from CA
- General pricing – flat \$6.50/gal, semi-gloss \$8.50/gal.
- Low or zero-VOC
- Recommended and used by Presidio of San Francisco

³ Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance. Recycled Latex Paint Success Stories.
<http://www.moea.state.mn.us/lc/purchasing/latexpaint.cfm>.

800-874-4436

http://www.kellymoore.com/products/groups/e_coat

Metro Paint

Metro Regional Government, Portland Oregon collects unused paint directly from consumers and consolidates it into a new product.

- 95% post consumer waste that
- 16 colors available
- Interior/Exterior
- Manufactured in Portland (if shipped from the 500-mile radius specified in LEED standards the use of Metro paint gives a point under the LEED certification)
- VOC's under the EPA's limit (between 150 and 200 g/l) although not as low as some low or no VOC paints.
- Metro hopes to be one of the first paints to obtain a Recycled Paint Green Seal certification GS43 - within the next few weeks.
- Price about 50% less than virgin paint.

Contact: Jim Quinn

<http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=521>

Sherwin Williams "Visions"

- 50-54% post consumer recycled content
- 6 colors plus custom colors
- Manufactured in Sacramento, CA
- Available at Sherwin Williams stores or through GSA Contract #GS-06F-0012M
- \$6.16/gal through GSA

Case Studies

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (various case studies from Minnesota)

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/lc/purchasing/latexpaint010515.pdf>

Additional Resources:

Environmentally Preferred Paint Options, King County

<http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/paint2.htm>

Green Seal, Choose Green Architectural Paint Report

http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/lc/greenseal/cgr_9912.pdf

Criteria for Decision Making:

An excellent criterion for selecting recycled paint is a listing on the GS43 recycled paint standard by Green Seal. This is a combined standard incorporating the quality factors such as durability and color fastness from the Master Painter Institute (MPI) with environmental criteria.

To help disseminate this information and encourage EPP, PPRC will list the summarized results, including contact information, on its website. Please let us know if this is not acceptable