How to Estimate How Much Paint You Need

When preparing for a painting project, buy wisely so that you don't have to store or dispose of large quantities of leftover paint. This chart will help you determine how much to buy.

1.	_____ ft.	x	_____ ft.	=	_____ sq. ft.
	The width of all walls added together		Height of the wall		Total wall surface (Square feet)
2.	_____ ft.	x	_____ ft.	=	_____ sq. ft.
	Height of window		Width of window		Window surface
3.	Repeat Line #2 for each window and add together.			=	_____ sq. ft.
					Total window surface
4.	_____ ft.	x	_____ ft.	=	_____ sq. ft.
	Height of door		Width of door		Door surface
5.	Repeat Line #4 for each door and add together.			=	_____ sq. ft.
					Total door surface
6.	_____ sq. ft.	+	_____ sq. ft.	=	_____ sq. ft.
	Total from line #3		Total from line #5		Total surface not painted
7.	_____ sq. ft.	−	_____ sq. ft.	=	_____ sq. ft.
	Total from line #1		Total from line #6		Total surface to be painted
8.	_____ sq. ft.	÷	_____ sq. ft.	=	_____ gal.
	Total from line #7		Manufacturer Spread rate (# sq. ft. per gal.)		No. of gallons needed for each coat of paint

What to do with Leftover paint?

Using the estimate chart, you should not have that much, is any, leftover paint. If you do have paint leftover, follow these tips:

★ **Use it up.** For small amounts, paint the inside of a cabinet, drawer, or storage shed. Paint a shelf, the dog house, bird feeder, or flower box. As a last resort, try painting old scrap lumber which can be discarded once the paint is dry.

★ **Give it away.** If you have an unusable amount of excess paint, offer it to a neighbor, relative, neighborhood group, scout troop, church, or school theater group for use.

★ **Save it.** Oil base paint will keep for many years as long as it is well sealed. To ensure that latex paint will be useable the next time you need it for touch-ups, place a sheet of plastic wrap over the opening of the paint can. Secure the lid on top of the plastic wrap and secure it into place with a hammer. (Cushion the lid with a folded clothe to prevent damage from the hammer.) Store the can of paint upside down and protect it from freezing.

For Latex Only:

★ **Dry it.** Paint is only a problem waste when it is in liquid form. Pour latex paint over kitty litter in a shallow container or trench lined with plastic. The litter will help absorb the moisture in the paint. When it has dried completely, break it up and place it in the regular trash.

★ **Consolidate it.** Pour partial cans of latex paint together into one can. Empty cans maybe set out in the sun to dry with the lids off. Once all moisture content is gone, the empty cans may be placed in the regular trash.

★ **Dispose of properly.** Take it to a Home Chemical Collection Center.