**ART Studio Solvents Usage Safety Guide**

**Exposure to solvents and toxic metals can be dangerous to your health:**

Common routes of exposure include ingestion, inhalation and absorption through the skin. Less toxic substitutes can often be used both in your painting process and for clean-up. Oil paint can be cleaned off hands and brushes with baby oil, followed by soap and water. Soap and water alone may be adequate if you are using acrylic paints, gouache or watercolors. Solvents such as mineral spirits, turpentine or other paint thinners may be needed for more demanding jobs. Before you use straight solvent, try a 50:50 mixture of baby oil and solvent. If using a mixture doesn't work and you need to use a straight solvent, read the product information for alternative products to choose a less toxic solvent.

**To use these paints and solvents safely, follow recommendations on the product's label, MSDS and Technical Data Sheet:**

Ventilate the work area whenever possible to remove airborne pollutants. Avoid using powders that generate airborne dusts. The dust may contain toxic metals, which cause serious harm when inhaled, absorbed, or ingested. If you are unable to remove these hazards from your workplace, you should eliminate or reduce bodily contact by using personal protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses/goggles, aprons and other barriers to avoid absorption of metals and solvents through the skin. In addition, consider using appropriate respiratory protection when spray painting or working with powders, and always when recommended on a product's MSDS, to prevent inhalation of toxic materials. There may be certain health considerations when choosing a respirator, so please consult with a medical professional before making your purchase.

**To expedite clean up and to reduce solvent use:**

Squeeze excess paint off brushes, rollers or tray liners, and when possible, put it back into the original labeled paint container. To minimize the amount of water or solvent needed to clean brushes, paint-out the paint remaining on a brush after a project is complete. Other water conservation methods include wash water reuse and counter-current rinsing. Sometimes, clean-up will require a strong solvent such as mineral spirits, turpentine or other paint thinners. To clean brushes and reuse solvent, hang your brush so that the bristles are covered by solvent but do not touch the bottom of the container. Most pigment solids will separate from the solvent, falling to the bottom of the container. When the brush is clean, remove it and slowly pour the solvent into a clean container, being careful not to disturb the solids at the bottom of the original container. This will allow you to reuse the solvent and properly dispose of the solids in the bottom of the original container. (See the disposal paragraph below.) Remember to cover all solvent containers, even while your brushes are soaking, to reduce fumes in your work area and to prevent fire and personal exposure. Use a temporary aluminum foil cover, perforated plastic cover or other cover (your brush handle may stick out through the cover) to cut down on the amount of vapors that escape into your work environment. This option should be for short term storage only while you are working with the materials. These tops will fail to prevent spills if the container tips over. Some plastic tops are fine for solvent storage. Many paint solvents are sold by the manufacturer in plastic containers. Remember to check containers periodically to ensure they will hold up for extended periods of time.

**The best solution for long-term solvent storage is to put it back into its original container:**

* Remove excess paint from brush.
* SOAK the suspended brush vertically in paint thinner to settle pigments.
* Decant the good thinner into a new container so it can be used again.
* Label and properly manage the residue.