



Travelling to Capital Plein Air with Paints

What Artists Need to Know

Flying with paints can feel confusing — but with the right preparation, it's very manageable.

1. Where to pack your materials

Always pack your paints in checked luggage — not carry-on.

- Carry-on liquids are restricted and more likely to be confiscated
 - Checked luggage is far less problematic for artist materials
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2. What you call your materials matters

This is one of the most important tips.

Avoid referring to your materials as “oil paints” or “paints” in general.

Instead, describe them as:

- **Artist pigments**
- **Artist colours made with vegetable oil**
- **water-based artist pigments with gum arabic**

Why this matters:

The term “oil” can raise concerns with airport staff, who may associate it with flammable products.

Artist colours are typically **non-flammable** due to their high flash point but using the right language helps avoid unnecessary issues.

3. Prevent leaks and damage

- Ensure all lids are **securely tightened**
- Place paints in a **sealed plastic (zip-lock) bag**
- Store inside a **rigid container if possible**

This protects both your gear and your luggage.

4. Include documentation (essential)

Always include a printed **Safety Data Sheet (SDS/MSDS)** with your materials. You can find this on the paint manufacturers website. Here is an example from Gamblin.

SAFETY DATA SHEET: General Artist Oil Color REVISED: 4/21/2023			
SAFETY DATA SHEET			
SECTION 1: PRODUCT AND COMPANY IDENTIFICATION			
PRODUCT			
Product Name:	Artist Oil Colors		
Product Description:	Vegetable oil/pigment mixture		
Intended Use:	Fine art painting and decorative coatings		
COMPANY			
Company Name:	Gamblin Artists Colors		
Company Address:	2734 SE Raymond St. Portland, OR 97202 USA		
Company Phone:	503-235-1945		
Emergency Phone:	Local Emergency Room		
SECTION 2: HAZARDS IDENTIFICATION			
GHS LABELING			
GHS Classification:	Not classified as hazardous		
HAZARDS			
Potential Health Effects:			
Eyes	May cause redness or irritation		
Skin	No known health effects		
Ingestion	No known health effects		
Inhalation	No known health effects		
Acute Health Hazards: No known health hazards			
Chronic Health Hazards:			
No known health hazards			
Environmental Hazards:			
No significant hazards			
SECTION 3: COMPOSITION/INFORMATION ON INGREDIENTS			
Hazardous Components:			
No hazardous components present in the preparations			
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SECTION 9: PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES

GENERAL INFORMATION

Physical State:	Paste
Color:	Various
Odor:	Vegetable oil
Odor Threshold:	N/D

IMPORTANT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

Boiling Point:	N/A
Melting Point:	N/A
Freezing Point:	N/A
Vapor Pressure:	N/D
Vapor Density:	N/D
Specific Gravity:	N/D
Evaporation Rate:	N/A
Solubility in Water:	Insoluble
Solids by Weight:	50-60%
Volatile:	N/A
Molecular Weight:	N/A
Viscosity:	N/D
Flash Point:	>500°F (260°C)

- Place it **inside the bag with your paints**
- Highlight the sections that say “**non hazardous**” and show the “**Low Flash Point**”
- This shows they are **safe for transport**
- Place a label on the outside of the plastic bag with a message to airline security. Here’s an example from Gamblin.

ATTENTION AIRLINE INSPECTORS

This package contains professional *artist pigments made with vegetable-oils*.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) defines non-flammable liquids as those with flash points above 140° F. These items have higher flash points between 200° and 500° F. Their Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) say they are **NOT HAZARDOUS**.

To confirm, see the highlighted sections in the enclosed Material Safety Data Sheets. Or please contact the US Dept of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration at 800-467-4922. ***Please do not discard! These pigments are expensive.***

If you need to reach me, contact me at the phone number or email address below:

Refer to the [Gamblin Guide for Travelling with Paints](#)

5. What to avoid

 Do **not** pack:

- Turpentine
- Mineral spirits
- Most liquid mediums or varnishes

These are considered **flammable** and are often confiscated.

✓ Instead:

- Buy solvents at your destination
 - Use solvent free gel by Gamblin
 - Or work solvent-free
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6. Keep it simple

- Travel with a **limited palette**
 - Bring only what you need
 - Use smaller tubes where possible
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7. Make it easy for security

- Pack neatly and clearly
 - Use transparent or labelled bags
 - Include the Safety Data Sheet from the paint manufacturer with highlights inside the plastic bag with the paints.
 - Tape a label on the outside of the plastic bag with tape that can be opened and sealed again easily.
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Final thoughts

- ✓ Checked luggage
- ✓ Secure packaging
- ✓ Include documentation
- ✓ Use the right terminology

These small steps make a big difference — helping you arrive ready to paint without issues.