

NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC
Form 424B5
January 08, 2003

[QuickLinks](#) -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

Prospectus Supplement
January 7, 2003
(To Prospectus dated July 12, 2002)

6,670,000 Shares

Newell Rubbermaid Inc.

Common Stock

Newell Rubbermaid Inc. is offering 6,670,000 shares of its common stock to be sold at an offering price of \$30.10 per share. Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the trading symbol "NWL." The last reported sale price for the common stock on January 6, 2003 was \$30.59 per share.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any other regulatory body has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

	Per Share	Total
Public offering price	\$ 30.10	\$ 200,767,000
Underwriting discount	\$ 0.10	\$ 667,000
Proceeds to Newell (before expenses)	\$ 30.00	\$ 200,100,000

The underwriter also may purchase up to an additional 667,000 shares of common stock from Newell at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount, within 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement to cover over-allotments.

The shares will be ready for delivery on or about January 10, 2003.

Banc of America Securities LLC

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus contain information about Newell Rubbermaid Inc. and about the common stock we are offering. They also refer to information contained in other documents filed by us with the Securities and Exchange Commission and incorporated into this document by reference. References to this prospectus supplement or the prospectus also include the information

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

contained in such other documents. To the extent that information appearing in a later filed document is inconsistent with prior information, the later statement will control. If this prospectus supplement is inconsistent with the prospectus, you should rely on this prospectus supplement.

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different or additional information. We are not making an offer of these securities in any state where the offer is not permitted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Prospectus Supplement	
Forward-Looking Statements	ii
Summary	S-1
Use of Proceeds	S-4
Price Range of Common Stock and Dividends	S-4
Underwriting	S-4
Legal Matters	S-6
Experts	S-6
Prospectus	
Newell Rubbermaid Inc.	3
Where You Can Find More Information	4
Use of Proceeds	5
Description of Debt Securities	5
Particular Terms of the Senior Debt Securities	13
Particular Terms of the Subordinated Debt Securities	17
Description of Capital Stock	18
Description of Warrants	20
Description of Stock Purchase Contracts and Stock Purchase Units	21
Plan of Distribution	21
Legal Matters	22
Experts	22

Forward-Looking Statements

We have made statements in this prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus and in the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein that constitute forward-looking statements, as defined by the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are subject to risks and uncertainties. The statements relate to, and other forward-looking statements that we may make may relate to, information or assumptions about sales, income, earnings per share, return on equity, return on invested capital, capital expenditures, working capital, dividends, capital structure, free cash flow, debt to capitalization ratios, interest rates, internal growth rates, impact of changes in accounting standards, pending legal proceedings and claims (including environmental matters), future economic performance, operating income improvements, synergies, management's plans, goals and objectives for future operations and growth. These statements generally are accompanied by words such as "intend," "anticipate," "believe," "estimate," "project," "target," "expect," "should" or similar statements.

You should understand that forward-looking statements are not guarantees because there are inherent difficulties in predicting future results. Actual results could differ materially from those expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. The factors that are discussed below, as well as the matters that are set forth generally in the 2001 Form 10-K, the 3rd Quarter 2002 Form 10-Q, in Exhibit 99.1 thereto and the documents incorporated by reference therein could cause actual results to differ. Some of these factors are described as criteria for success. Our failure to achieve, or limited success in achieving, these objectives could result in actual results differing materially from those expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. In addition, there can be no assurance that we have correctly identified and assessed all of the factors affecting us or that the information we receive or which is publicly available with respect to these factors is complete or correct.

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those suggested by the forward-looking statements include:

the strength of the retail economies in various parts of the world, primarily in North America and to a lesser extent Europe, Central and South America and Asia;

the rapid growth of large mass merchandisers, together with changes in consumer shopping patterns, which have contributed to the formation of dominant multi-category retailers, many of which have strong bargaining power with suppliers;

our consistent ability to develop innovative new products that create consumer demand for our products;

our ability to develop, maintain and strengthen our end-user brands so that our retailer customers will need our products to meet consumer demand;

our ability to improve productivity and streamline operations to control and reduce costs;

our ability to continuously improve our manufacturing efficiencies and develop sources of supply on a world-wide basis;

our ability to continue to make sufficient strategic acquisitions at reasonable prices and to integrate the acquired businesses successfully, obtaining anticipated cost savings and operating income improvements within a reasonable period of time; and

the impact on foreign operations of currency devaluation, other currency fluctuations and the Euro currency conversion, tariffs, nationalization, exchange controls, interest rates, limitations on foreign investment in local business and other political, economic and regulatory risks and difficulties.

ii

SUMMARY

The following summary may not contain all of the information that is important to you. You should read the following summary together with more detailed information regarding us and the common stock being sold in this offering and our financial statements and notes thereto which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement. Unless otherwise indicated or the context otherwise requires, references in this prospectus supplement to "Newell," "we," "us" and "our" are to Newell Rubbermaid Inc. and its subsidiaries.

Newell Rubbermaid Inc.

We are a global manufacturer and full-service marketer of name-brand consumer products serving the needs of volume purchasers, including department stores, discount stores and warehouse clubs, home centers and hardware stores, and office superstores and contract stationers. Our basic business strategy is to market a multi-product offering of branded consumer products, backed by an obsession with customer service excellence and new product development.

Our multi-product offering consists of name-brand consumer products in the following four business groups:

Rubbermaid Group. This group primarily designs, manufactures, markets and distributes indoor and outdoor organization, storage and cleaning products under the Rubbermaid®, Roughneck®, TakeAlongs®, StainShield® and Blue Ice® brands and infant and juvenile products under the Graco® and Little Tikes® brands.

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

Sharpie Group. This group primarily designs, manufactures, markets and distributes pens, pencils, markers and other fine writing instruments under the Sharpie®, Paper Mate®, Parker®, Waterman® and Colorific® brands and hair accessories and grooming products under the Goody® brand.

Levolor/Hardware Group. This group primarily designs, manufactures, markets and distributes hand tools, power tool accessories and cabinet hardware under the Irwin®, Vise-Grip®, Quick-Grip®, Shur-Line® and BernzOmatic® brands and window furnishings under the Levolor® and Kirsch® brands.

Calphalon Home Group. This group primarily designs, manufactures, markets and distributes cookware, bakeware and related serving products under the Calphalon® brand and photo albums and picture frames.

We established five key measures to evaluate financial performance: internal sales growth, operating income as a percent of sales, working capital as a percent of sales, free cash flow and return on invested capital.

In an effort to achieve superior performance in the five key financial measures, we are pursuing the following transformational strategic initiatives:

Productivity. We are committed to reducing the cost of manufacturing a product by at least five percent per year on an annual basis. We are also reducing costs by centralizing our purchasing of raw materials and restructuring our businesses to improve efficiencies in manufacturing, distribution and transportation.

Streamlining. We are reducing costs and removing excess organizational layers in an effort to be the low-cost supplier.

New Product Development. We are committed to developing and introducing cutting-edge, innovative new products. This effort centers on developing low cost products that meet end-user needs.

S-1

Marketing. We are transforming our Company from a "push" to a "pull" marketing organization, focusing on the end-user. The marketing effort focuses largely on an extensive grass roots marketing campaign highlighted by our Phoenix Program. The Phoenix Program consists of recent university graduates deployed in strategic retailers to merchandise product, build relations with our customers and end-users and increase sales.

Strategic Account Management. We are allocating resources to those strategic retailers that we believe will continue to grow in the future. We have deployed senior executive teams dedicated to some of our strategic accounts and have consolidated our sales force to facilitate responsiveness and develop even closer relationships with retailers.

Collaboration. We are building an operating environment among our various businesses reinforcing the importance of working together, maximizing economies of scale and utilizing best practices.

We are a Delaware corporation. Our principal executive offices are located at 29 East Stephenson Street, Freeport, Illinois 61032, and our telephone number is 815-235-4171.

Recent Developments

Effective January 1, 2003, we completed the acquisition of American Saw & Mfg. Co., a leading manufacturer of power tool accessories and hand tools marketed under the Lenox® brand. The purchase price was approximately \$450 million, and the transaction structure permits the deduction of goodwill for tax purposes. We estimate the present value of the future tax benefit to be \$85 million, which effectively reduces the purchase price of the acquisition to approximately \$365 million. American Saw had 2001 revenues of \$185 million and has manufacturing and

distribution facilities in North America, Europe, South America and Asia. American Saw will become part of our Levolor/Hardware Group.

S-2

The Offering

Common stock offered	6,670,000 shares
Common stock to be outstanding immediately after the offering	274,096,163 shares
Use of proceeds	The net proceeds from the sale of our common stock offered hereby (after deducting estimated expenses of the offering) are estimated to be approximately \$200,000,000 (\$220,010,000 if the underwriter's over-allotment option is exercised in full). The proceeds from the offering will be used to reduce borrowings under our commercial paper program and for general corporate purposes.

New York Stock Exchange symbol **NWL**

The number of shares of common stock offered and to be outstanding immediately after this offering does not include:

Shares of common stock that the underwriter has an option to purchase from us within 30 days of the date of this prospectus supplement;

Shares issuable upon the exercise of stock options held by our employees, executive officers and directors; and

Shares issuable upon conversion of our convertible quarterly income preferred securities.

A description of our common stock is in the accompanying prospectus under the caption "Description of Capital Stock."

S-3

USE OF PROCEEDS

The net proceeds from the sale of our common stock offered hereby (after deducting estimated expenses of the offering) are estimated to be approximately \$200,000,000 (\$220,010,000 if the underwriter's over-allotment option is exercised in full). We will use the proceeds from the offering to reduce borrowings under our commercial paper program and for general corporate purposes. The proceeds of the commercial paper being repaid were originally used for general corporate purposes. As of January 6, 2003, the weighted average interest rate on borrowings under our commercial paper program was 1.44% per year.

Pending application for the foregoing purposes, the net proceeds from this offering will be invested in short-term interest bearing instruments or other investment grade securities.

PRICE RANGE OF COMMON STOCK AND DIVIDENDS

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

Our common stock is listed and traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "NWL." The following table sets forth, for the periods indicated, the range of high and low sale prices for our common stock. On January 6, 2003, the last reported sale price for our common stock was \$30.59 per share.

	Common Stock	
	High	Low
2001		
First Quarter	\$ 29.21	\$ 23.38
Second Quarter	27.34	24.00
Third Quarter	25.40	21.20
Fourth Quarter	28.13	22.87
2002		
First Quarter	\$ 33.85	\$ 26.50
Second Quarter	35.87	30.61
Third Quarter	35.99	27.26
Fourth Quarter	34.19	28.95
2003		
First Quarter (through January 6, 2003)	\$ 31.41	\$ 30.43
As of January 6, 2003, there were 23,629 holders of record of our common stock.		

Annual dividends paid in each of 2001 and 2002 were \$0.84 per share. Future dividends will be paid at the discretion of the board of directors and will be determined after consideration of various factors, including our earnings and financial condition.

UNDERWRITING

Banc of America Securities LLC is acting as underwriter. Subject to the terms and conditions stated in the underwriting agreement dated the date of this prospectus supplement, the underwriter has agreed to purchase, and we have agreed to sell to the underwriter, 6,670,000 shares of common stock.

The underwriting agreement provides that the obligations of the underwriter to purchase the shares included in this offering are subject to approval of legal matters by counsel and to other conditions. The underwriter is obligated to purchase all the shares (other than those covered by the over-allotment option described below) if it purchases any of the shares.

S-4

The underwriter proposes to offer some of the shares directly to the public at the public offering price set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement. If all of the shares are not sold at the initial offering price, the underwriter may change the public offering price and the other selling terms.

We have granted to the underwriter an option, exercisable for 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement, to purchase up to 667,000 additional shares of common stock at the public offering price less the underwriting discount. The underwriter may exercise the option solely for the purpose of covering over-allotments, if any, in connection with this offering.

We, and certain named executive officers, have agreed that, for a period of 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement, we and they will not, without the prior written consent of Banc of America Securities LLC, dispose of or hedge any shares of our common stock or any securities convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock. Banc of America Securities LLC in its sole discretion may release any of the securities subject to these lock-up agreements at any time without notice.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "NWL."

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

The following table shows the underwriting discounts and commissions that we are to pay to the underwriter in connection with this offering. These amounts are shown assuming both no exercise and full exercise of the underwriter's option to purchase additional shares of common stock.

	Paid by Newell	
	No Exercise	Full Exercise
Per Share	\$ 0.10	\$ 0.10
Total	\$ 667,000	\$ 733,700

In connection with the offering, Banc of America Securities LLC may purchase and sell shares of common stock in the open market. These transactions may include short sales, covering transactions and stabilizing transactions. Short sales involve sales of common stock in excess of the number of shares to be purchased by the underwriter in the offering, which creates a short position. "Covered" short sales are sales of shares made in an amount up to the number of shares represented by the underwriter's over-allotment option. In determining the source of shares to close out the covered short position, the underwriter will consider, among other things, the price of shares available for purchase in the open market as compared to the price at which they may purchase shares through the over-allotment option. Transactions to close out the covered short involve either purchases of the common stock in the open market after the distribution has been completed or the exercise of the over-allotment option. The underwriter may also make "naked" short sales of shares in excess of the over-allotment option. The underwriter must close out any naked short position by purchasing shares of common stock in the open market. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriter is concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of the shares in the open market after pricing that could adversely affect investors who purchase in the offering. Stabilizing transactions consist of bids for or purchases of shares in the open market while the offering is in progress.

Any of these activities may have the effect of preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of the common stock. They may also cause the price of the common stock to be higher than the price that would otherwise exist in the open market in the absence of these transactions. The underwriter may conduct these transactions on the New York Stock Exchange or in the over-the-counter market, or otherwise. If the underwriter commences any of these transactions, it may discontinue them at any time.

We estimate that our portion of the total expenses of this offering will be \$100,000.

S-5

The underwriter has performed investment banking and advisory services for us from time to time for which it has received customary fees and expenses. An affiliate of the underwriter is co-syndication agent on our 364-Day Credit Agreement and Five-Year Credit Agreement. The underwriter and its affiliates may, from time to time, engage in transactions with and perform services for us in the ordinary course of their business.

A prospectus in electronic format may be made available on websites maintained by the underwriter. The underwriter may agree to allocate a number of shares for sale to its online brokerage account holders. In addition, shares may be sold by the underwriter to securities dealers who resell shares to online brokerage account holders.

We have agreed to indemnify the underwriter against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, or to contribute to payments the underwriter may be required to make because of any of those liabilities.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the common stock offered hereby will be passed upon for Newell by Schiff Hardin & Waite, Chicago, Illinois. Sidley Austin Brown & Wood, Chicago, Illinois will act as counsel for the underwriter. Schiff Hardin & Waite has advised Newell that, as of the date hereof, a member of the firm participating in the representation of Newell in this offering owns 4,363 shares of common stock.

EXPERTS

Our consolidated financial statements and schedules as of December 31, 2001 and 2000 and for each of the three years in the period ended December 31, 2001 incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus and elsewhere in the registration

statement have been audited by Arthur Andersen LLP, independent auditors, as stated in their reports with respect thereto, and are included herein in reliance upon the authority of said firm as experts in giving said reports.

After reasonable efforts, we have been unable to obtain Arthur Andersen LLP's written consent to the incorporation by reference of such financial statements. Accordingly, we have omitted such consent in reliance upon Rule 437a under the Securities Act of 1933.

Because Arthur Andersen LLP has not consented to the incorporation by reference of our financial statements, you may not be able to recover against Arthur Andersen LLP under Section 11 of the Securities Act for any untrue statements of a material fact contained in such financial statements or any omissions to state a material fact required to be stated therein.

Events arising out of the conviction of Arthur Andersen LLP of one count of obstruction of justice arising from the government's investigation of Enron Corporation, as well as the volume of civil lawsuits filed against it, have adversely affected the ability of Arthur Andersen to satisfy claims, if any, arising from its provision of auditing services to us, including claims that may arise out of Arthur Andersen's audit of our consolidated financial statements, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus.

S-6

PROSPECTUS

\$500,000,000

Newell Rubbermaid Inc.

Debt Securities

Preferred Stock

Common Stock

Warrants

Stock Purchase Contracts

Stock Purchase Units

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission under a "shelf" registration process. Under this process, we may sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings up to a total initial offering price of \$500,000,000. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities registered under this process, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and any supplement carefully before you invest. This prospectus may not be used to make sales of offered securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information that is different from, or additional to, the information provided in this prospectus or any later prospectus supplement. We are not making an offer to sell securities in any state or country where the offer is not permitted.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The Date of this Prospectus is July 12, 2002.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Newell Rubbermaid Inc.	3
Where You Can Find More Information	4
Use of Proceeds	5
Description of Debt Securities	5
Particular Terms of the Senior Debt Securities	13
Particular Terms of the Subordinated Debt Securities	17
Description of Capital Stock	18
Description of Warrants	20
Description of Stock Purchase Contracts and Stock Purchase Units	21
Plan of Distribution	21
Legal Matters	22
Experts	22

NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC.

We are a global manufacturer and full-service marketer of name-brand consumer products serving the needs of volume purchasers, including discount stores and warehouse clubs, home centers and hardware stores, and office superstores and contract stationers. Our basic business strategy is to merchandise a multi-product offering of everyday consumer products, backed by an obsession with customer service excellence and new product development, in order to achieve maximum results for our stockholders. Our financial objectives are to achieve above-average sales and earnings per share growth, maintain a superior return on investment and maintain a conservative level of debt. To accomplish these objectives, we established five key measures to measure financial performance: internal sales growth, operating income as a percent of sales, working capital as a percent of sales, free cash flow and return on invested capital. We define free cash flow as cash provided from operating activities less capital expenditures and dividends.

In an effort to achieve superior performance in the five key financial measures, we introduced six transformational strategic initiatives in 2001 as follows: Productivity, Streamlining, Product Development, Marketing, Key Account Management, and Collaboration.

Productivity is the initiative to reduce the cost of manufacturing a product by at least five percent per year, annually. Streamlining is the commitment to reduce non-value added costs and cut out excess layers, in an effort to be the low-cost supplier. Product Development represents the commitment to develop and introduce cutting-edge, innovative new products to the market. The Marketing initiative represents our commitment to transform from a push to pull marketing organization, focusing on the end-user. The Key Account Management initiative represents our intention to allocate resources to those strategic retailers we believe will continue to grow in the near future. Collaboration is our initiative for the divisional operating units to work together and maximize economies of scale and the use of best practices.

Our multi-product offering consists of name-brand consumer products in four business segments: Rubbermaid; Parker/Eldon; Levolor/Hardware; and Calphalon/WearEver. Product categories and principal brand names within these segments include the following:

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

Business Segments	Product Categories	Principal Brands(1)
Rubbermaid	Indoor and outdoor organization, storage and cleaning products	Rubbermaid, Curver
	Infant and juvenile products	Little Tikes, Graco, Century
	Hair accessories and beauty organizers	Goody
Parker/Eldon	Markers and writing instruments	Sanford, Sharpie, Paper Mate, Parker, Waterman, Rotring
	Office storage and organization products	Eldon, Rolodex
	Private label cosmetic pencils	Cosmolab
Levolor/Hardware	Window treatments	Levolor, Kirsch
	Hardware and tools	Amerock, BernzOmatic, Vise-Grip, Irwin, Quick-Grip, Spur, Bulldog, Dorfile, EZ Paint
3		
Calphalon/WearEver	Aluminum and stainless steel cookware and bakeware	Calphalon, WearEver, Mirro, Panex
	Glassware	Anchor Hocking
	Picture frames and photo albums	Burnes of Boston, Connoisseur, Panodia

(1) All the listed brand names are trademarks, which are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Our principal corporate offices are located at the Newell Center, 29 East Stephenson Street, Freeport, Illinois 61032, and our telephone number at such offices is 1-815-235-4171.

Recent Developments

We recorded a \$538.0 million pre tax charge for goodwill impairment in the first quarter of 2002 upon adoption of Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 142, *Goodwill and Other Intangible Assets*. We gave consideration to the risks of further material write-offs of goodwill, and concluded that, absent significant market deteriorations or unusual and unanticipated events, the likelihood of any further significant write-offs of goodwill is remote. As a result, as previously disclosed, we anticipate no additional impairment charges for 2002. In addition, we will test again for impairment if events or circumstances occur subsequent to our annual impairment tests that would more likely than not reduce the fair value of a reporting unit below its carrying amount.

On June 15, 2002, Arthur Andersen LLP was convicted of one count of obstruction of justice arising from the government's investigation of Enron Corporation. Events arising out of the conviction of Arthur Andersen LLP, as well as the volume of civil lawsuits filed against it, have adversely affected the ability of Arthur Andersen to satisfy claims, if any, arising from its provision of auditing services to us, including claims that may arise out of Arthur Andersen's audit of our consolidated financial statements as of December 31, 2001 and 2000 and for each of the three years in the period ended December 31, 2001, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

On June 17, 2002, we completed the syndication of new revolving credit facilities totaling \$1.3 billion, consisting of a 364-day credit agreement in the amount of \$650 million and a five-year credit agreement in the amount of \$650 million. These replace our \$1.3 billion credit facility that was scheduled to mature in August 2002. The financing will be used for general corporate purposes and commercial paper backstop.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission. You may read and copy any document we file at the Securities and Exchange Commission's public reference room at 450 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. You may obtain information on the operation of the public reference room by calling the Securities and Exchange Commission at 1-800-SEC-0330. Our Securities and Exchange Commission filings are also available to the public at the Securities and Exchange Commission's web site at <http://www.sec.gov>.

The Securities and Exchange Commission allows us to "incorporate by reference" into this prospectus the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus, and later information that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission will automatically update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings made with the Securities and Exchange Commission

4

under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 until our offering is completed:

1. Annual Report on Form 10-K, as amended, for the year ended December 31, 2001.
2. Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2002.
3. Current Reports on Form 8-K filed March 14, April 1, as amended, and July 10, 2002.
4. The description of our common stock contained in Newell's registration statement on Form 8-B filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 30, 1987.
5. The description of our common stock purchase rights contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A dated August 28, 1998.

You may request a copy of these filings at no cost by writing to or telephoning us at the following address:

Newell Rubbermaid Inc.
6833 Stalter Drive, Suite 101
Rockford, Illinois 61108
Telephone: 1-800-424-1941
Attention: Office of Investor Relations

USE OF PROCEEDS

We expect to use the net proceeds from the sale of the securities for general corporate purposes. These may include additions to working capital, repayment of existing debt and acquisitions. If we decide to use the net proceeds from the sale of securities in some other way, we will describe the use of the net proceeds in the prospectus supplement for that offering.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

General

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

The following description sets forth general terms that may apply to the debt securities. The particular terms of any debt securities will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to those debt securities.

The debt securities will be either our senior debt securities or our subordinated debt securities. The senior debt securities will be issued under an indenture dated as of November 1, 1995, between us and JPMorgan Chase Bank (formerly The Chase Manhattan Bank (National Association)), as trustee. This indenture is referred to as the "senior indenture." The subordinated debt securities will be issued under an indenture in the form of the indenture to be entered into between us and JPMorgan Chase Bank, as trustee. This indenture is referred to as the "subordinated indenture." The senior indenture and the subordinated indenture are together called the "indentures."

Copies of the indentures are filed as exhibits to the registration statement. For your convenience, we have included references to specific sections of the indentures in the descriptions below. Capitalized terms not otherwise defined in this prospectus shall have the meanings shown in the indenture to which they relate.

The following summaries of provisions of the debt securities and the indentures are not complete and are qualified in their entirety by express reference to all of the provisions of the indentures and the debt securities.

Because Newell is a holding company and conducts its business through its subsidiaries, these notes will be structurally subordinated to the liabilities of its subsidiaries. The rights of Newell, and the

5

rights of its creditors, including the holders of the notes, to participate in any distribution of the assets of any of its subsidiaries upon that subsidiary's liquidation or reorganization or otherwise is necessarily subject to the prior claims of creditors of that subsidiary, except to the extent that Newell's claims as a creditor of that subsidiary may be recognized. Neither the debt securities nor the indentures restrict Newell or any of its subsidiaries from incurring indebtedness. Substantially all of Newell's consolidated accounts payable represent obligations of Newell's subsidiaries, and as of December 31, 2001, the aggregate principal amount of money borrowed by Newell's consolidated subsidiaries, including accounts payable, equaled approximately \$1,117.8 million (the current portion of which was approximately \$515.3 million).

Neither of the indentures limits the principal amount of debt securities that we may issue. Each indenture provides that debt securities may be issued up to the principal amount that we may separately authorize from time to time. Each also provides that the debt securities may be denominated in any currency or currency unit designated by us. Unless otherwise shown in the prospectus supplement related to that offering, neither the indentures nor the debt securities will contain any provisions to afford holders of any debt securities protection in the event of a takeover, recapitalization or similar restructuring of our business.

The senior debt securities will rank equally with all of our other unsecured and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated debt securities will rank junior to all of our senior debt securities and other senior indebtedness as we describe below under "Particular Terms of the Subordinated Debt Securities Subordination."

We will include specific terms relating to a particular series of debt securities in a prospectus supplement relating to the offering. The terms we will describe in the prospectus supplement will include some or all of the following:

- (1) the distinct title and type of the debt securities;
- (2) the total principal amount or initial offering price of the debt securities;
- (3) the date or dates when the principal of the debt securities will be payable;
- (4) the rate at which the debt securities will bear interest;
- (5) the date from which interest on the debt securities will accrue;
- (6)

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

the dates when interest on the debt securities will be payable and the regular record date for these interest payment dates;

(7)

the place where

the principal, premium, if any, and interest on the debt securities will be paid,

registered debt securities may be surrendered for registration of transfer, and

debt securities may be surrendered for exchange;

(8)

any sinking fund or other provisions that would obligate us to repurchase or otherwise redeem the debt securities;

(9)

the terms and conditions upon which we will have the option to redeem the debt securities;

(10)

the denominations in which any registered debt securities will be issuable, if other than denominations of \$1,000 or integral multiples, and the denominations in which any bearer debt securities will be issuable, if other than a denomination of \$5,000;

(11)

the identity of each Security Registrar and Paying Agent, and the designation of the Exchange Rate Agent, if any, if other than the Trustee;

6

(12)

the portion of the principal amount of debt securities that will be payable upon acceleration of the Maturity of the debt securities;

(13)

the currency used to pay principal, premium and interest on the debt securities, if other than U.S. Dollars, and whether you or we may elect to have principal, premium and interest paid in a currency other than the currency in which the debt securities are denominated;

(14)

any index, formula or other method used to determine the amount of principal, premium or interest on the debt securities;

(15)

whether provisions relating to defeasance and covenant defeasance will be applicable to the series of debt securities;

(16)

any changes to the Events of Default, Defaults or to our covenants made in the applicable indenture;

(17)

whether the debt securities are issuable as registered debt securities or bearer debt securities, whether there are any restrictions relating to the form in which they are issued and whether bearer and registered debt securities may be exchanged for each other;

(18)

to whom interest will be payable

if other than the registered Holder (for registered debt securities),

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

if other than upon presentation and surrender of the related coupons (for bearer debt securities), or

if other than as specified in the indentures (for global debt securities);

- (19) if the debt securities are to be convertible or exchangeable for other securities, the terms of conversion or exchange;
- (20) particular terms of subordination with respect to subordinated debt securities; and
- (21) any other terms of the debt securities.

We may issue debt securities as original issue discount securities to be sold at a substantial discount below their principal amount. If we issue original issue discount securities, then special federal income tax rules that apply may be described in the prospectus supplement for those debt securities.

Registration and Transfer

We presently plan to issue each series of debt securities only as registered securities. However, we may issue a series of debt securities as bearer securities, or a combination of both registered securities and bearer securities. If we issue debt securities as bearer securities, they will have interest coupons attached unless we elect to issue them as zero coupon securities. (Sections 201 and 301). If we issue bearer securities, we may describe material U.S. federal income tax consequences and other material considerations, procedures and limitations in the prospectus supplement for that offering.

Holders of registered debt securities may present the debt securities for exchange for different authorized amounts of other debt securities of the same series and of similar principal amount at the corporate trust office of the Trustee in New York, New York or at the office of any other transfer agent we may designate for the purpose and describe in the applicable prospectus supplement. The registered securities must be duly endorsed or accompanied by a written instrument of transfer. The agent will not impose a service charge on you for the transfer or exchange. We may, however, require that you pay any applicable tax or other governmental charge. We will describe any procedures for the exchange of bearer securities for other debt securities of the same series in the prospectus supplement for that offering. Generally, we will not allow you to exchange registered securities for bearer securities. (Sections 301, 305 and 1002)

7

In general, unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will issue registered securities without coupons and in denominations of \$1,000, or integral multiples, and bearer securities in denominations of \$5,000. We may issue both registered and bearer securities in global form. (Sections 301 and 302)

Conversion and Exchange

If any debt securities will be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or other securities, the applicable prospectus supplement will set forth the terms and conditions of the conversion or exchange, including:

the conversion price or exchange ratio;

the conversion or exchange period;

whether the conversion or exchange will be mandatory or at the option of the holder or Newell;

provisions for adjustment of the conversion price or exchange ratio; and

provisions that may affect the conversion or exchange if the debt securities are redeemed.

Global Securities

The debt securities of a series may be issued in whole or in part in the form of one or more global securities that we will identify in a prospectus supplement. Unless and until it is exchanged in whole or in part for the individual debt securities represented thereby, a global security may not be registered for transfer or exchange except:

as a whole by the depository for the global security to a nominee of the depository, by a nominee of the depository to the depository or another nominee of the depository, or by the depository or a nominee of the depository to a successor depository or a nominee of the successor depository; and

in any other circumstances described in the prospectus supplement applicable thereto.

The specific terms of the depository arrangement with respect to any portion of a series of debt securities to be represented by a global security will be described in the prospectus supplement applicable thereto. Newell expects that the following provisions will apply to depository arrangements.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, debt securities that are to be represented by a global security to be deposited with or on behalf of a depository will be represented by a global security or, in some cases, global securities registered in the name of the depository or its nominee. Upon the issuance of the global security, and the deposit of the global security with or on behalf of the depository for the global security, the depository will credit on its book entry registration and transfer system the respective principal amounts of the debt securities represented by the global security to the accounts of institutions that have accounts with the depository or its nominee ("participants"). The accounts to be credited will be designated by the underwriters or agents of the debt securities. If we directly offer and sell debt securities the accounts to be credited will be designated by us. Ownership of beneficial interests in the global security will be limited to participants or persons that may hold interests through participants. Ownership of beneficial interests by participants in the global security will be shown on, and the transfer of that ownership interest will be effected only through, records maintained by the depository or its nominee for the global security. Ownership of beneficial interests in the global security by persons that hold through participants will be shown on, and the transfer of that ownership interest within the participant will be effected only through, records maintained by the participant. The laws of some jurisdictions require that certain

purchasers of securities take physical delivery of the securities in certificated form. The foregoing limitations and the laws may impair the ability to transfer beneficial interests in the global securities.

So long as the depository for a global security, or its nominee, is the registered owner of the global security, the depository or the nominee, as the case may be, will be considered the sole owner or "Holder" of the debt securities represented by the global security for all purposes under the indenture applicable thereto. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, owners of beneficial interests in the global security will not be entitled to have debt securities of the series represented by the global security registered in their names, will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of debt securities of the series in certificated form and will not be considered the Holders of the debt securities for any purposes under the indenture applicable thereto. Accordingly, each person owning a beneficial interest in the global security must rely on the procedures of the depository and, if the person is not a participant, on the procedures of the participant through which the person owns its interest to exercise any rights of a Holder of debt securities under the indenture applicable thereto. Newell understands that under existing industry practices, if Newell requests any action of Holders or an owner of a beneficial interest in the global security desires to give any notice or take any action a Holder is entitled to give or take under the indenture applicable thereto, then the depository would authorize the participants to give this notice or take this action, and participants would authorize beneficial owners owning through these participants to give this notice or take this action or would otherwise act upon the instructions of beneficial owners owning through them.

Principal of and any premium and interest on a global security will be payable in the manner described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets

As provided in the indentures, we may, without the consent of Holders of the debt securities, consolidate with or merge into, or convey, transfer or lease all or substantially all of our properties and assets to, any person (the "Survivor"), and we may permit any person to merge into, or convey, transfer or lease its properties and assets substantially as an entirety to us so long as:

the Survivor is a corporation, limited liability company, partnership or trust organized and validly existing under the laws of any United States jurisdiction and expressly assumes our obligations on the debt securities and under the indentures;

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no Default or Event of Default shall have occurred and be continuing under the indentures; and

certain other conditions regarding delivery of an Officers' Certificate and Opinion of Counsel are met. (Section 801)

Acceleration of Maturity

If an Event of Default occurs and continues with respect to debt securities of a particular series, the Trustee or the Holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of outstanding debt securities of that series may declare the outstanding debt securities of that series due and payable immediately. (Section 502)

At any time after a declaration of acceleration with respect to debt securities of any series has been made and before a judgment or decree for payment of the money due has been obtained by the Trustee therefor, the Holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of

9

that series by written notice to Newell and the Trustee, may rescind and annul the declaration and its consequences if:

(1) Newell has paid or deposited with the Trustee a sum sufficient to pay in the Currency in which the debt securities of the series are payable, except as otherwise specified in the applicable indenture:

all overdue interest on all outstanding debt securities of that series and any related Coupons,

all unpaid principal of and premium, if any, on any of the debt securities which has become due otherwise than by the declaration of acceleration, and interest on the unpaid principal at the rate or rates prescribed therefor in the debt securities,

to the extent lawful, interest on overdue interest at the rate or rates prescribed therefor in the debt securities, and

all sums paid or advanced by the Trustee and the reasonable compensation, expenses, disbursements and advances of the Trustee, its agents and counsel; and

(2) all Events of Default with respect to debt securities of that series, other than the non-payment of amounts of principal, interest or any premium on the debt securities which have become due solely by the declaration of acceleration, have been cured or waived. (Section 502)

No rescission shall affect any subsequent default or impair any right consequent thereon.

The Holders of not less than a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may, on behalf of the Holders of all the debt securities of the series and any related Coupons, waive any past default under the applicable indenture with respect to the series and its consequences, except a default:

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

- (1) in the payment of the principal of or premium, if any, or interest on any Debt Security of the series or any related Coupon, or
- (2) in respect of a covenant or provision that cannot be modified or amended without the consent of the Holder of each Outstanding Debt Security of the series affected thereby. (Section 513)

If an Event of Default with respect to debt securities of a particular series occurs and is continuing, the Trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under the applicable indenture at the request or direction of any of the Holders of debt securities of the series, unless the Holders shall have offered to the Trustee reasonable indemnity and security against the costs, expenses and liabilities that might be incurred by it in compliance with the request. (Section 602)

The Holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the series have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the Trustee under the applicable indenture, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the Trustee with respect to the debt securities of that series. The Trustee may refuse to follow directions in conflict with law or the indenture that may involve the Trustee in personal liability or may be unduly prejudicial to the other, non-directing Holders. (Section 512)

Modification or Waiver

The indentures allow Newell and the Trustee, without the consent of any Holders of debt securities, to enter into supplemental indentures for various purposes, including:

evidencing the succession of another entity to us and the assumption of our covenants and obligations under the debt securities and the indenture by this successor,

10

adding to Newell's covenants for the benefit of the Holders,

adding additional Events of Default for the benefit of the Holders,

establishing the form or terms of any series of debt securities issued under the supplemental indentures or curing ambiguities or inconsistencies in the indentures, and

making other provisions that do not adversely affect the interests of the Holders of any series of debt securities in any material respect. (Section 901)

The indentures allow Newell and the Trustee, with the consent of the Holders of not less than a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of all affected series acting as one class, to execute supplemental indentures adding any provisions to or changing or eliminating any of the provisions of the indentures or modifying the rights of the Holders of the debt securities of the series. (Section 902) Without the consent of the Holders of all the outstanding debt securities affected thereby, no supplemental indenture may:

change the Stated Maturity of the principal of, or any installment of principal of or interest on, any debt security;

reduce the principal amount of, the rate of interest on, or any premium payable upon the redemption of, any debt security;

reduce the amount of the principal of any original issue discount security that would be due and payable upon acceleration of the Maturity of the debt security;

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

change any Place of Payment where, or the currency, currencies or currency unit or units in which, any debt security or any premium or interest thereon is payable;

impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment on or after the Stated Maturity of the debt security or, in the case of redemption, on or after the Redemption Date;

affect adversely the right of repayment at the option of the Holder of any debt security of the series;

reduce the percentage in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series, the consent of whose Holders is required for a supplemental indenture, or the consent of whose Holders is required for any waiver of compliance with various provisions of the indenture or various defaults thereunder and their consequences provided for in the indentures; or

modify any of the foregoing described provisions. (Section 902)

Meetings

The indentures contain provisions for convening meetings of the Holders of debt securities of any series for any action to be made, given or taken by Holders of debt securities. The Trustee, Newell, and the Holders of at least 10% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series may call a meeting, in each case after notice to Holders of that series has been properly given. (Section 1502)

Persons entitled to vote a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series will constitute a quorum at a meeting of Holders of debt securities of that series. Any resolution passed or decision taken at any meeting of Holders of debt securities of any series that has been properly held under the provisions of the indentures will bind all Holders of debt securities of that series and related coupons. (Section 1503)

11

Financial Information

Newell will file with the Securities and Exchange Commission the annual reports, quarterly reports and other documents required to be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission by Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, and will also file with the Trustee copies of these reports and documents within 15 days after it files them with the Securities and Exchange Commission. (Section 703)

Defeasance

The indentures include provisions allowing us to be discharged from our obligation on the debt securities of any series. (Section 1401) To be discharged from our obligations on the debt securities, we would be required to deposit with the Trustee or another trustee money or U.S. Government Obligations sufficient to make all principal, premium (if any) and interest payments on those debt securities. (Section 1404) If we make this defeasance deposit with respect to your debt securities, we may elect either:

to be discharged from all of our obligations on your debt securities, except for our obligations to register transfers and exchanges, to replace temporary or mutilated, destroyed, lost or stolen debt securities, to maintain an office or agency in respect of the debt securities and to hold moneys for payment in trust (Section 1402); or

in the case of senior debt securities, to be released from restrictions relating to liens and sale-leaseback transactions and, in the case of all debt securities, to be released from other covenants as may be described in the prospectus supplement relating to such debt securities. (Section 1403)

To establish the trust, Newell must deliver to the Trustee an opinion of our counsel that the Holders of the debt securities will not recognize gain or loss for Federal income tax purposes as a result of the defeasance and will be subject to Federal income tax on the same amount, and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the defeasance had not occurred. (Section 1404 (5)) There may be

additional provisions relating to defeasance which we will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement.

The Trustee

JPMorgan Chase Bank (formerly The Chase Manhattan Bank N.A.) ("JPMorgan Chase") is the Trustee under the Senior Indenture and the Subordinated Indenture. JPMorgan Chase is also the agent for the lenders, and a lender, under a revolving credit facility with Newell which, as of the date hereof, permits an aggregate borrowing of up to \$1.3 billion, so long as the terms and conditions of this facility are satisfied. J.P. Morgan Securities Inc., an affiliate of JPMorgan Chase, has from time to time acted as an agent or underwriter with respect to distribution of our securities. In addition, we and some of our affiliates maintain other banking and borrowing arrangements with JPMorgan Chase, and JPMorgan Chase may perform additional banking services for, or transact other banking business with, Newell in the future.

The Trustee may be deemed to have a conflicting interest for purposes of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 and may be required to resign as Trustee if:

there is an Event of Default under the indenture; and

one or more of the following occurs:

the Trustee is a trustee for another indenture under which our securities are outstanding;

12

the Trustee is a trustee for more than one outstanding series of debt securities under a single indenture;

the Trustee is one of our creditors; or

the Trustee or one of its affiliates acts as an underwriter or agent for us.

Newell may appoint an alternative Trustee for any series of debt securities. The appointment of an alternative Trustee would be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Governing Law

The indentures and the debt securities are by their terms to be governed by and their provisions construed under the internal laws of the State of New York. (Section 112)

Miscellaneous

Newell has the right at all times to assign any of its respective rights or obligations under the indentures to a direct or indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of Newell; provided, that, in the event of any assignment, Newell will remain liable for all of their respective obligations. (Section 803) The indentures are binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties thereto and their respective successors and assigns. (Section 109)

PARTICULAR TERMS OF THE SENIOR DEBT SECURITIES

The following description of the senior debt securities sets forth additional general terms and provisions of the senior debt securities to which a prospectus supplement may relate. The debt securities are described generally in this prospectus under "Description of Debt Securities" above. The particular terms of the senior debt securities offered by a prospectus supplement will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Limitation on Liens

The senior indenture provides that while the senior debt securities issued under it or the related Coupons remain outstanding, Newell will not, and will not permit any of its Subsidiaries to, create, incur, assume or suffer to exist any Lien of any kind upon any of its or their property or assets, now owned or hereafter acquired, without directly securing all of the senior debt securities equally and ratably with the obligation or liability secured by the Lien, except for:

- (1) Liens existing as of the date of the senior indenture;
- (2) Liens, including Sale and Lease-back Transactions, on any property acquired, constructed or improved after the date of the senior indenture, which are created or assumed contemporaneously with, or within 180 days after, the acquisition or completion of this construction or improvement, or within six months thereafter by a commitment for financing arranged with a lender or investor within the 180-day period, to secure or provide for the payment of all or a portion of the purchase price of the property or the cost of the construction or improvement incurred after the date of the senior indenture (or before the date of the indenture in the case of any construction or improvement which is at least 40% completed at the date of the indenture) or, in addition to Liens contemplated by clauses (3) and (4) below, Liens on any property existing at the time of acquisition of the property including acquisition through merger or consolidation; provided, that any Lien other than a Sale and Lease-back Transaction meeting the requirements of this clause does not apply to any property theretofore owned by Newell or a subsidiary other than, in the case of any the

construction or improvement, theretofore unimproved real property on which the property so constructed or the improvement, is located;
- (3) Liens existing on any property of a person at the time the person is merged with or into, or consolidates with, Newell or a Subsidiary;
- (4) Liens on any property of a person (including, without limitation, shares of stock or debt securities) or its subsidiaries existing at the time the person becomes a Subsidiary, is otherwise acquired by Newell or a Subsidiary or becomes a successor to Newell under Section 802 of the senior indenture;
- (5) Liens to secure an obligation or liability of a Subsidiary to Newell or to another Subsidiary;
- (6) Liens in favor of the United States of America or any State, or any department, agency or instrumentality or political subdivision of the United States of America or any State, to secure partial progress, advance or other payments under any contract or statute or to secure any indebtedness incurred for the purpose of financing all or any part of the purchase price or the cost of constructing or improving the property subject to the Liens;
- (7) Liens to secure tax-exempt private activity bonds under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;
- (8) Liens arising out of or in connection with a Sale and Lease-back Transaction if the net proceeds of the Sale and Lease-back Transaction are at least equal to the fair value, as determined by the Board of Directors, the Chairman of the Board, the Vice Chairman of the Board, the President or the principal financial officer of Newell, of the property subject to the Sale and Lease-back Transaction;
- (9) Liens for the sole purpose of extending, renewing or replacing in whole or in part indebtedness secured by any Lien referred to in the foregoing clauses (1) to (8), inclusive, or in this clause (9); provided, however, that the principal amount of indebtedness secured thereby shall not exceed the principal amount of indebtedness so secured at the time of the extension, renewal or replacement, and that this extension, renewal or replacement shall be limited to all or a part of the property which secured the Lien so extended, renewed or replaced plus improvements on the property;

- (10) Liens arising out of or in connection with a Sale and Lease-back Transaction in which the net proceeds of the Sale and Lease-back Transaction are less than the fair value, as determined by the Board of Directors, the Chairman of the Board, the Vice Chairman of the Board, the President or the principal financial officer of Newell, of the property subject to the Sale and Lease-back Transaction if Newell provides in a Board Resolution that it shall, and if Newell covenants that it will, within 180 days of the effective date of any arrangement or, in the case of (C) below, within six months thereafter under a firm purchase commitment entered into within the 180-day period, apply an amount equal to the fair market value as so determined of the property:
- (A) to the redemption of senior debt securities of any series which are, by their terms, at the time redeemable or the purchase and retirement of senior debt securities, if permitted;
- (B) to the payment or other retirement of Funded Debt, as defined below, incurred or assumed by Newell which ranks senior to or *pari passu* with the senior debt securities or of Funded Debt incurred or assumed by any Subsidiary other than, in either case, Funded Debt owned by Newell or any Subsidiary; or

14

- (C) to the purchase of property other than the property involved in the sale;
- (11) Liens on accounts receivable and related general intangibles and instruments arising out of or in connection with a sale or transfer by Newell or the Subsidiary of the accounts receivable;
- (12) Permitted Liens; and
- (13) Liens other than those referred to in clauses (1) through (12) above which are created, incurred or assumed after the date of the senior indenture, including those in connection with purchase money mortgages, Capitalized Lease Obligations and Sale and Lease-back Transactions, provided that the aggregate amount of indebtedness secured by the Liens, or, in the case of Sale and Lease-back Transactions, the Value of the Sale and Lease-back Transactions, referred to in this clause (13), does not exceed 15% of Consolidated Total Assets. (Section 1007)

The term "Capitalized Lease Obligations" means, as to any person, the obligations of the person to pay rent or other amounts under a lease of (or other agreement conveying the right to use) real or personal property which obligations are required to be classified and accounted for as capital lease obligations on a balance sheet of the person under generally accepted accounting principles and, for purposes of the senior indenture, the amount of the obligations at any date shall be the capitalized amount of the obligations at the date, determined according to generally accepted accounting principles. (Section 101)

The term "Consolidated Total Assets" means the total of all the assets appearing on the consolidated balance sheet of Newell and our Subsidiaries determined according to generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the type of business in which Newell and the Subsidiaries are engaged, and may be determined as of a date not more than 60 days before the happening of the event for which the determination is being made. (Section 101)

The term "Funded Debt" means any indebtedness which by its terms matures at or is extendable or renewable at the sole option of the obligor without requiring the consent of the obligee to a date more than 12 months after the date of the creation of the indebtedness. (Section 101)

The term "Lien" means, as to any person, any mortgage, lien, collateral assignment, pledge, charge, security interest or other encumbrance in respect of or on, or any interest or title of any vendor, lessor, lender or other secured party to or of the person under any conditional sale or other title retention agreement or Capitalized Lease Obligation, purchase money mortgage or Sale and Lease-back Transaction with respect to, any property or asset (including without limitation income and rights thereto) of the person (including without limitation capital stock of any Subsidiary of the person), or the signing by the person and filing of a financing statement which names the person as debtor, or the signing by

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

the person of any security agreement agreeing to file, or authorizing any other party as the secured party thereunder to file, any financing statement. (Section 101)

The term "Permitted Liens" means:

mechanics, materialmen, landlords, warehousemen and carriers liens and other similar liens imposed by law securing obligations incurred in the ordinary course of business which are not past due or which are being contested in good faith by appropriate proceedings and for which appropriate reserves have been established;

Liens under workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, social security or similar legislation;

Liens, deposits, or pledges to secure the performance of bids, tenders, contracts (other than contracts for the payment of money), leases, public or statutory obligations, surety, stay, appeal,

15

indemnity, performance or other similar bonds, or similar obligations arising in the ordinary course of business;

judgment and other similar Liens arising in connection with court proceedings, provided the execution or other enforcement of the Liens is effectively stayed and the claims secured thereby are being actively contested in good faith and by appropriate proceedings; and

easements, rights of way, restrictions and other similar encumbrances which, in the aggregate, do not materially interfere with the occupation, use and enjoyment by Newell or any Subsidiary of the property or assets encumbered thereby in the normal course of its business or materially impair the value of the property subject thereto. (Section 101)

The term "Sale and Lease-back Transaction" means, with respect to any person, any direct or indirect arrangement with any other person or to which any other person is a party, providing for the leasing to the first person of any property, whether now owned or hereafter acquired (except for temporary leases for a term, including any renewal of the leases, of not more than three years and except for leases between Newell and a Subsidiary or between Subsidiaries), which has been or is to be sold or transferred by the first person to the other person or to any person to whom funds have been or are to be advanced by the other person on the security of the property. (Section 101)

The term "Subsidiary" means any corporation of which at the time of determination Newell or one or more Subsidiaries owns or controls directly or indirectly more than 50% of the shares of Voting Stock. (Section 101)

The term "Value" means, with respect to a Sale and Lease-back Transaction, as of any particular time, the amount equal to the greater of:

- (a) the net proceeds from the sale or transfer of the property leased under the Sale and Lease-back Transaction or
- (b) the fair value in the opinion of the Board of Directors, the Chairman of the Board, the Vice Chairman of the Board, the President or the principal financial officer of Newell of the property at the time of entering into the Sale and Lease-back Transaction,

in either case multiplied by a fraction, the numerator of which shall be equal to the number of full years of the term of the lease remaining at the time of determination and the denominator of which shall be equal to the number of full years of the term, without regard to any renewal or extension options contained in the lease. (Section 101)

The term "Voting Stock" means stock of a corporation of the class or classes having general voting power under ordinary circumstances to elect at least a majority of the board of directors, managers or trustees of the corporation. (Section 101)

Events of Default

An "Event of Default" regarding any series of senior debt securities is any one of the following events:

default for 30 days in the payment of any interest installment when due and payable;

default in the payment of principal or premium (if any) when due at its stated maturity, by declaration, when called for redemption or otherwise;

default in the making of any sinking fund payment when due;

default in the performance of any covenant in the senior debt securities or in the senior indenture for 60 days after notice to Newell by the Trustee or by Holders of 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series;

16

events of bankruptcy, insolvency and reorganization of Newell or one of its significant subsidiaries;

an event of default in any mortgage, indenture or other instrument of indebtedness of Newell or any of its principal subsidiaries which results in a principal amount in excess of \$10,000,000 being due and payable which remains outstanding longer than 30 days after written notice to Newell from the Trustee or from the Holders of at least 25% of the outstanding debt securities of that series; and

any other Event of Default provided with respect to that series of debt securities. (Section 501)

We are required to file every year with the Trustee an officers' certificate stating whether any default exists and specifying any default that exists. (Section 1004)

PARTICULAR TERMS OF THE SUBORDINATED DEBT SECURITIES

The following description of the subordinated debt securities sets forth additional general terms and provisions of the subordinated debt securities to which a prospectus supplement may relate. The debt securities are described generally under "Description of Debt Securities" above. The particular terms of the subordinated debt securities offered by a prospectus supplement will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Subordination

The subordinated debt securities will be subordinated to the prior payment in full of:

the senior debt securities and all other unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness of Newell ranking equally with the senior debt securities; and

other indebtedness of Newell to the extent shown in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Events of Default

An "Event of Default" regarding any series of subordinated debt securities is any one of the following events:

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

default for 60 days in the payment of any interest installment when due and payable;

default in the payment of principal or premium (if any) when due at its stated maturity, by declaration, when called for redemption or otherwise;

default in the making of any sinking fund payment when due;

default in the performance of any covenant in the subordinated debt securities or in the subordinate indenture for 90 days after notice to Newell by the Trustee or by Holders of 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series;

events of bankruptcy, insolvency and reorganization of Newell or one of its significant subsidiaries;

an event of default in any mortgage, indenture or other instrument of indebtedness of Newell which results in a principal amount in excess of \$15,000,000 being due and payable which remains outstanding longer than 30 days after written notice to Newell from the Trustee or from the Holders of at least 25% of the outstanding debt securities of that series;

any other Event of Default provided with respect to that series of debt securities. (Section 501)

We are required to file every year with the Trustee an officers' certificate stating whether any default exists and specifying any default that exists. (Section 1004)

17

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

General

Our authorized capital stock consists of 800,000,000 shares of common stock and 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock. As of February 28, 2002 there were 282,375,766 shares of common stock and no shares of preferred stock outstanding. The outstanding shares of common stock are listed on the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Stock Exchange.

Common Stock

Voting Holders of common stock vote as a single class on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders, with each share of common stock entitled to one vote.

Dividends. Holders of the common stock are entitled to receive the dividends that may be declared from time to time by the Board of Directors out of funds legally available therefor. The rights of holders of common stock to receive dividends are subject to the prior rights of holders of any issued and outstanding preferred stock that may be issued in the future.

Other Provisions. Upon liquidation (whether voluntary or involuntary) or a reduction in Newell's capital which results in any distribution of assets to stockholders, the holders of the common stock are entitled to receive, pro rata according to the number of shares held by each, all of the assets of Newell remaining for distribution after payment to creditors and the holders of any issued and outstanding preferred stock of the full preferential amounts to which they are entitled. The common stock has no preemptive or other subscription rights and there are no other conversion rights or redemption provisions with respect to the shares.

Transfer Agent and Registrar. The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is First Chicago Trust Company of New York.

Stock Purchase Rights

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

Each outstanding share of common stock includes one common stock purchase right (a "Right") provided under the Rights Agreement dated as of August 6, 1998 between Newell and First Chicago Trust Company of New York. Each Right entitles the holder, until the earlier of October 31, 2008 or the redemption of the Rights, to buy the number of shares of common stock having a market value of two times the exercise price of \$200, subject to adjustment under certain circumstances. The Rights will be exercisable only if a person or group acquires 15% or more of voting power of Newell or announces a tender offer following which it would hold 15% or more of Newell's voting power. The Rights held by the 15% stockholder would not be exercisable in this situation.

Furthermore, if following the acquisition by a person or group of 15% or more of Newell's voting power, Newell were acquired in a merger or other business combination or 50% or more of its assets were sold, each Right, other than Rights held by the 15% stockholder, would become exercisable for that number of shares of common stock or securities of the surviving company in a business combination having a market value of two times the exercise price of the Right.

Newell may redeem the Rights at \$0.001 per Right before the occurrence of an event that causes the Rights to become exercisable for common stock.

As of the date of this prospectus, the Rights are not exercisable, certificates representing the Rights have not been issued and the Rights automatically trade with the shares of common stock. The Rights will expire on October 31, 2008, unless earlier redeemed.

18

Preferred Stock

Our Board of Directors may issue, without further authorization from our stockholders, up to 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock in one or more series. Our Board of Directors may determine at the time of creating each series:

dividend rights and rates;

voting and conversion rights;

redemption provisions;

liquidation preferences; and

other relative, participating, optional or other special rights, qualifications, limitations or restrictions of the series.

We will describe in a prospectus supplement relating to any series of preferred stock being offered the terms of the preferred stock, which may include:

- (1) The maximum number of shares to constitute the series;
- (2) Any annual dividend rate on the shares, whether the rate is fixed or variable or both, the date or dates from which dividends will accrue, whether the dividends will be cumulative and any dividend preference;
- (3) Whether the shares will be redeemable and, if so, the price at and the terms and conditions on which the shares may be redeemed;
- (4) Any liquidation preference applicable to the shares;

- (5) The terms of any sinking fund;
- (6) Any terms and conditions on which the shares of the series shall be convertible into, or exchangeable for, shares of any other capital stock;
- (7) Any voting rights of the shares of the series; and
- (8) Any other preferences or special rights or limitations on the shares of the series.

Although Newell is not required to seek stockholder approval before designating any future series of preferred stock, the Board of Directors presently has a policy of seeking stockholder approval before designating any future series of preferred stock with a vote, or convertible into stock having a vote, in excess of 13% of the vote represented by all voting stock immediately after the issuance, except for the purpose of (a) raising capital in the ordinary course of business or (b) making acquisitions, the primary purpose of which is not to effect a change of voting power.

Provisions With Possible Anti-Takeover Effects

As discussed above, Newell has adopted a Rights Agreement that provides stockholders with rights to purchase shares of common stock or securities of Newell (or of an acquiring company) at half of the market price under certain circumstances involving a potential change in control of Newell that has not been approved by the Board of Directors. The Rights Agreement is intended as a means to protect the value of the stockholders' investment in Newell while preserving the possibility of a fair acquisition bid. In addition, the Delaware General Corporation Law provides, among other things, that any beneficial owner of more than 15% of Newell's voting stock is prohibited, without the prior approval of the Board of Directors, from entering into any business combination with a company for three years from the date the 15% ownership interest is acquired. Additionally, the "fair price provisions" of the Restated Certificate of Incorporation require that specific proposed business combinations between

Newell and an "interested party," a beneficial owner of 5% or more of the voting shares of Newell, must be approved by the holders of 75% of the voting shares, unless certain fair price and procedural requirements are met or the business combination is approved by the directors of Newell who are not affiliated with the interested party. A vote of the holders of 75% of Newell's outstanding voting stock is required to amend the fair price provisions of the Restated Certificate of Incorporation.

Newell's Restated Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws contain other provisions which may be viewed as having an anti-takeover effect. The Restated Certificate of Incorporation classifies the Board of Directors into three classes and provides that vacancies on the Board of Directors are to be filled by a majority vote of directors and that directors so chosen will hold office until the end of the full term of the class in which the vacancy occurred. A vote of the holders of 75% of Newell's outstanding voting stock is required to amend these provisions. Under the Delaware General Corporation Law, directors of Newell may only be removed for cause. The Restated Certificate of Incorporation and the By-Laws also contain provisions that may reduce surprise and disruptive tactics at stockholders' meetings. The Restated Certificate of Incorporation provides that no action may be taken by stockholders except at an annual meeting or special meeting, and does not permit stockholders to directly call a special meeting of stockholders. A stockholder must give written notice to Newell of an intention to nominate a director for election at an annual meeting 90 days before the anniversary date of the immediately preceding annual meeting. Each of these provisions tends to make a change of control of the Board of Directors more difficult and time consuming.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may issue warrants to purchase debt or equity securities. We may issue warrants independently or together with any offered securities. The warrants may be attached to or separate from those offered securities. We will issue the warrants under warrant agreements to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as warrant agent, all as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any holders or beneficial owners of warrants.

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

The prospectus supplement relating to any warrants that we may offer will contain the specific terms of the warrants. These terms may include the following:

the title of the warrants;

the designation, amount and terms of the securities for which the warrants are exercisable;

the designation and terms of the other securities, if any, with which the warrants are to be issued and the number of warrants issued with each other security;

the price or prices at which the warrants will be issued;

the aggregate number of warrants;

any provisions for adjustment of the number or amount of securities receivable upon exercise of the warrants or the exercise price of the warrants;

the price or prices at which the securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants may be purchased;

if applicable, the date on and after which the warrants and the securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants will be separately transferable;

if applicable, a discussion of the material U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to the exercise of the warrants;

20

any other terms of the warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the warrants;

the date on which the right to exercise the warrants will commence, and the date on which the right will expire;

the maximum or minimum number of warrants that may be exercised at any time; and

information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any.

Exercise of Warrants

Each warrant will entitle the holder of warrants to purchase for cash the amount of debt or equity securities at the exercise price stated or determinable in the prospectus supplement for the warrants. Warrants may be exercised at any time up to the close of business on the expiration date shown in the applicable prospectus supplement, unless otherwise specified in such prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void. Warrants may be exercised as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. When the warrant holder makes the payment and properly completes and signs the warrant certificate at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the prospectus supplement, we will, as soon as possible, forward the debt or equity securities that the warrant holder has purchased. If the warrant holder exercises the warrant for less than all of the warrants represented by the warrant certificate, we will issue a new warrant certificate for the remaining warrants.

DESCRIPTION OF STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND STOCK PURCHASE UNITS

We may issue stock purchase contracts, including contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and for us to sell to the holders, a specified number of shares of common stock at a future date or dates. The price per share of common stock and the number of shares of common stock may be fixed at the time the stock purchase contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula stated in the stock purchase contracts.

The stock purchase contracts may be issued separately or as part of units that we call "stock purchase units." Stock purchase units consist of a stock purchase contract and either our debt securities or debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. treasury securities, securing the holders' obligations to purchase the common stock under the stock purchase contracts.

The stock purchase contracts may require us to make periodic payments to the holders of the stock purchase units or vice versa, and these payments may be unsecured or prefunded on some basis. The stock purchase contracts may require holders to secure their obligations in a specified manner.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the stock purchase contracts or stock purchase units. The description in the prospectus supplement will only be a summary, and you should read the stock purchase contracts, and, if applicable, collateral or depository arrangements, relating to the stock purchase contracts or stock purchase units. Material U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to the stock purchase units and the stock purchase contracts will be also be discussed in the applicable prospectus supplement.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities:

through underwriters,

through agents,

directly to a limited number of institutional purchasers or to a single purchaser, or

21

any combination of these.

The prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the offering of the securities, including the following:

the name or names of any underwriters, dealers or agents;

the purchase price and the proceeds we will receive from the sale;

any underwriting discounts and other items constituting underwriters' compensation; and

any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers.

If underwriters are used in the sale, the securities will be acquired by the underwriters for their own account and may be resold from time to time in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions, at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. The securities may be either offered to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters or by underwriters without a syndicate. The obligations of the underwriters to purchase securities will be subject to conditions precedent and the

Edgar Filing: NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC - Form 424B5

underwriters will be obligated to purchase all the securities if any are purchased. Any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers may be changed from time to time.

If dealers are used in the sale, we will sell the securities to the dealers as principals. The dealers may resell the securities to the public at prices determined by the dealers at the time of the resale.

We may sell securities directly or through agents we designate from time to time. Any agent involved in the offer or sale of the securities in respect of which this prospectus is delivered will be named, and any commissions payable by us to that agent, will be described in the prospectus supplement.

The names of the underwriters, dealers or agents, as the case may be, and the terms of the transaction will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Agents and underwriters may be entitled to indemnification by us against civil liabilities arising out of this prospectus, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribution with respect to payments which the agents or underwriters may be required to make relating to those liabilities. Agents, dealers and underwriters may be customers of, engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us in the ordinary course of business.

Our common stock will be approved for listing upon notice of issuance on the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Stock Exchange. Other securities may or may not be listed on a national securities exchange. No assurances can be given that there will be a market for the Securities.

LEGAL MATTERS

Legal matters in connection with the securities will be passed upon for Newell by Schiff Hardin & Waite, Chicago, Illinois and for any underwriters, dealers or agents by counsel named in the applicable prospectus supplement. Schiff Hardin & Waite has advised Newell that, as of the date hereof, a member of the firm participating in the representation of Newell in this offering owns approximately 4,253 shares of common stock.

EXPERTS

The financial statements and schedules incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement have been audited by Arthur Andersen LLP, independent public

22

accountants, as indicated in their reports with respect thereto, and are included herein in reliance upon the authority of said firm as experts in giving said reports.

After reasonable efforts, we have been unable to obtain Arthur Andersen LLP's written consent to the incorporation by reference of such financial statements in amendments to the registration statement. Accordingly, we have omitted such consents in reliance upon Rule 437a of the Securities Act of 1933.

Because Arthur Andersen LLP has not consented to the incorporation by reference of our financial statements in amendments to the registration statement, you may not be able to recover against Arthur Andersen LLP under Section 11 of the Securities Act for any untrue statements of a material fact contained in such financial statements or any omissions to state a material fact required to be stated therein.

23

6,670,000 Shares

Newell Rubbermaid Inc.

Common Stock

Prospectus Supplement
January 7, 2003

Banc of America Securities LLC

QuickLinks

[ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT](#)

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[Forward-Looking Statements](#)

[SUMMARY](#)

[Newell Rubbermaid Inc.](#)

[Recent Developments](#)

[The Offering](#)

[USE OF PROCEEDS](#)

[PRICE RANGE OF COMMON STOCK AND DIVIDENDS](#)

[UNDERWRITING](#)

[LEGAL MATTERS](#)

[EXPERTS](#)

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[NEWELL RUBBERMAID INC.](#)

[Recent Developments](#)

[WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION](#)

[USE OF PROCEEDS](#)

[DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES](#)

[PARTICULAR TERMS OF THE SENIOR DEBT SECURITIES](#)

[PARTICULAR TERMS OF THE SUBORDINATED DEBT SECURITIES](#)

[DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK](#)

[DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS](#)

[DESCRIPTION OF STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND STOCK PURCHASE UNITS](#)

[PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION](#)

[LEGAL MATTERS](#)

[EXPERTS](#)