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Selecting Paint

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Smart Shopping for Home Furnishings

Selecting Paint

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Home Furnishings & Housing Specialist

1987 HI 13

Shopping for paint? When shopping for paint, you will find many different kinds. Some paints are more appropriate to use under certain conditions than others. To get a good paint job, you should be able to answer these questions.

- WHAT'S ON THE MARKET?
- WHAT AM I GOING TO PAINT?
- WHICH FINISH IS APPROPRIATE FOR MY WALL?
- HOW MUCH PAINT DO I NEED?
- WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?
- WHAT'S ON THE WARRANTY?

WHAT'S ON THE MARKET?

Today, there are a variety of paints on the market. The newer paints have epoxies, vinyls, and acrylics mixed with different oils and vehicles, which make it possible to paint different surfaces and offer a better paint job. Each paint has specific qualities, characteristics, and uses. General terms used to identify different types of paint are primers, latex, oil base, alkyd, enamel, and acrylic.

Primers. These are used under the finish coat for more even painting and to provide a bonding between the undersurface and the top paint finish. Primers are also used on surfaces that need to be repainted after part or most of the paint has been removed or worn off. The surface may need to be scraped and sanded before applying the primer. In addition, there are a lot of special primers on the market, which make it possible to paint over plastic, glass, metal, and vinyl. Check to make sure you get the right primer to go over the right surface.

It is a good idea to read the label of the top coat paint to make sure it is compatible with the primer. Under some circumstances, an extra application of the top coat takes the place of a primer coat.

Primers come in both oil-base and latex. Use latex primer on sheetrock and oil-based primers on unpainted wood. Do not use latex primers on bare wood, unless information on the paint can indicates it will not raise the wood grain. It is the water in the latex paint that raises

the wood grain, making the wood surface rough. Under some circumstances the raised wood grain is not caused by the paint, it is caused by not sanding the wood smooth.

To paint wood paneling, use an oil-based primer over the wood before applying the top paint coat. If the paneling is vinyl, use a special primer for vinyl before painting. This procedure also applies to painting vinyl wall coverings.

Usually concrete does not need priming. If painting new concrete, let it set and age a few months before painting or paint will peel. Before painting, remove the alkaline in the concrete by cleaning it with muriatic acid. Acetone cleaner maybe used to remove grease and other foreign substances. Both of these chemicals are toxic and should be used with good ventilation and caution. After removing the alkali, fill the concrete or cinder block holes with some type of filler or use a special heavy body paint that primes, fills, and finishes concrete in one operation. After the filler has dried, paint the concrete with two coats of paint.

When painting metal, use a metal primer. There are primers that have additives that inhibit rust development. Before priming rusty metal, you should remove all the rust. If there is any rust left, it usually discolors the primer and top paint coat as well as continues to oxidize the metal. After priming the metal, use an oil-based or latex paint for the top coat. You cannot always use a latex paint over a metal primer. Some products that are primed at the factory, such as some metal doors, will not accept a latex paint. So you have to use an oil-based paint.

Latex Paint. Top coat latex paints have been around for a long time. Some of the new latex paints provide an excellent finish. hey consist of pigments suspended in water, therefore, they are thinned with water instead of mineral spirits or turpentine. You may find a latex paint with the terms acrylic, vinyl, or rubber-based on the label. These materials are added to the latex to make it dry faster and make it more durable. Acrylic-based latex paints are fast drying, washable, durable, and ready to repaint in less than an hour. Some vinyl-based latex paints are self-priming and fast drying. Rubber-based latex paints are effectively used on metal and masonry.

Advantages of latex paint:

- comes in gloss, stain, and flat finishes
- dries quickly
- is easy to apply and touch up
- can apply two coats in one day
- cleans up easily
- is non-flammable
- can be used on almost any surface
- especially suited for painting sheetrock
- spots can be touched up easily
- sometimes a prime coat is not needed
- can often be washed, depending on type

Disadvantages of latex paint:

- may have to wait 30 days before washing
- does not clean as well as oil-based paints
- must be sanded between coats on new woodwork.
- is not as durable as oil-based paints
- may rust metal

- sometimes does not adhere to glossy surfaces
- some brands yellow with time
- must be stored where it will not freeze
- may become brittle and chip
- generally cannot be used on metal and wood

Oil-based Paints. These paints are very common on the market. They consist of alkyd resins thinned with solvents like paint thinner or turpentine.

Advantages of oil-based paint:
- can be purchased from high-gloss to flat finish
- wall easily cleaned after being painted
- may resist chips and mars
- covers some wall imperfections
- resists stains
- may not need a prime coat

Disadvantages of oil-based paint:
- fades faster than latex paint
- hard to touch up
- may become shiny after repeated cleaning
- can discolor if applied over masonry
- thinned with a solvent, therefore more costly
- requires solvent to clean brushes
- flammable
- has an odor when newly applied

Enamel Paint. The term enamel used to mean that the paint dried into a hard shiny surface and cleaned easily. Today, however, the term enamel is less precisely used. Enamel is available in oil-based and latex and comes in high-gloss, semi-gloss, or satin finish.

WHERE AM I GOING TO PAINT?

It is important to consider the kind and condition of the wall surface before selecting a paint. What is on the wall determines whether to sand or prime the surface. The paint surface also affects the type of paint you purchase and the number of coats needed.

Poor surface preparation is where most paint failures occur. Any time you paint over a glossy, slick, dirty, greasy surface that is not properly prepared, you are asking for paint problems.

Liquid sand paper removes grease, dirt, and dulls the finish so the paint will adhere to the wall surface. It is easy to use. All you have to do is dampen a cloth with the liquid and wipe the wall surface.

Other surfaces that have potential paint problems are cement, paint with mildew growth, vinyl, peeling paint, new sheetrock, and new wood. Cement contains alkaline, which causes hot spots and burns on the painted surface. This problem is eliminated by washing off the alkaline with one of the many compounds available for that purpose before painting. Some people think they can cover mildew by just painting. The problem is the mildew has to be removed before painting or the mildew continues to grow and works up through the new paint. Trying to paint over vinyl presents some painting problems. Vinyl paneling or vinyl wall covering cannot be painted unless the vinyl has been prepared with a special material,

which makes it so the paint bonds to the vinyl surface. A flat finished wall can also present a painting problem. If you paint a flat finish onto another flat finish, the paint may appear shinier in some areas. You may need to prime the wall surface and then use a paint with a flat finish. Peeling paint may mean moisture is under the paint. If there is a moisture problem, determine where the moisture is coming from and eliminate the moisture before repainting. To paint new sheetrock, the first coat should be a latex primer, not an oil-based primer. The latex primer lays the sheetrock nap down, resulting in a smooth finish coat. On new wood, use an oil-based primer. This is because the water in the latex causes the wood to swell, therefore, requiring more sanding.

WHICH FINISH IS APPROPRIATE FOR MY WALL?

Before you can determine which finish is appropriate for your wall, you need to decide how often you are going to clean your walls. This is one of the factors that determines which finish you select.

You can determine how much wall cleaning you will do by how much the room is used. Living rooms and bedrooms are not used very much, so they will not need to be cleaned very often. Halls are used more than living rooms and bedrooms, so they will need a little more cleaning. Kitchens, recreation rooms, and bathrooms have large amounts of moisture, grease, and dirt in the air and surfaces in these rooms need to be cleaned often.

All paints have a finish and each finish differs in wearability and washability. The type of finish, therefore, should be considered when selecting the right paint for a specific room. Paint comes in several types of finishes. They are **flat, eggshell, satin, semi-gloss**, and **high-gloss**. The higher the gloss, the easier it is to wash.

Flat paint finishes have no shine and a dull mat finish, which reduces glare and absorption of fight. Flat paints are best painted on walls and ceilings that need little cleaning. If you need a wall surface that is more washable, select a paint with a little more shine.

Eggshell and satin finishes are nearly the same in their degree of shine. They provide a dull surface with a light shine. Both are washable. Anything as shiny as or shinier than satin is washable.

Semi-gloss paint finishes are between a flat finish and a high-gloss finish. Two coats of semi-gloss paint make the wall washable and possibly scrubbable. When a paint is washable it means that you can wash it carefully with soap and water. When a paint is scrubbable, it means you can take a sponge, soap and water, and clean the paint. Semi-gloss finishes are a good choice for walls and ceilings in kitchens, bathrooms, and children’s rooms where washability is important.

High-gloss paint finishes are very shiny and bright. They may however, produce a glare, which shows wall surface imperfections. These finishes are the easiest to clean and are used on the walls and ceilings of kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms where grease and moisture may present a cleaning problem.

HOW MUCH PAINT DO I NEED?

For prime coats, you can cover approximately 300 square feet of surface with one gallon of paint. For finish coats, you can cover approximately 400 square feet per gallon. These figures are estimates for smooth and sealed surfaces. If painting dry, porous surfaces, more paint will be needed.

To figure how many square feet you have to cover with the paint, multiply the height by the width in feet for each wall to get the square feet. The ceiling is figured by multiplying the length by the width (see Figure 13.1, Figuring Square Feet For Paint Coverage). Add the

total square feet of the walls and ceiling together. Deduct the square feet for areas, such as windows and doors, that are not to be painted. Compare the total square feet of the walls and ceiling with how many square feet the paint covers, found on the paint can label (see Figure 13.2, Paint Coverage on Label).

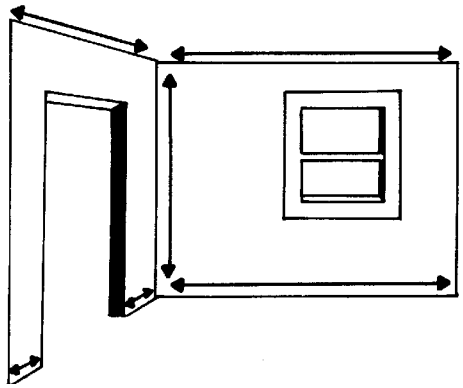

Figure 13.1. Figuring Square Feet for Paint Coverage

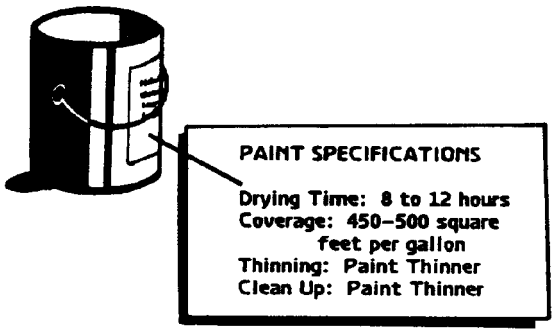

Figure 13.2. Paint Coverage on Label

WHAT'S ON THE LABEL?

Most paint cans have a lot of information on the label. You will find the name of the manufacturer, the type of paint and finish, the name and number of the paint, the warranty, and steps to follow when painting. This information is very useful. Take the time to read the label.

WHAT'S ON THE WARRANTY?

A warranty on paint is somewhat misleading because there are so many factors leading up to a paint failure. If you apply the paint according to the manufacturer's instructions, the warranty is effective.

The warranty covers paint that is defective before it is ever put on the wall. One such defect is lumpy paint that can not be brushed out. If you find this problem, take the paint to the store to be shaken on a machine designed for that purpose. If the lumps still do not come out, the store should replace the paint.

Defective paint that is too thin or too thick is rarely found any more. There are however, some new paints that are thicker than most paints. These paints have a mushy consistency and are used to better cover different types of wall surface referred to as high-hide.

✔QUALITY CHECKLIST

After each question, answer with a yes* or no.

1. Did you read the label of the top coat paint to see if it is compatible with your primer?
2. Does the paint have the right finish for how much you are going to clean your wall?
3. Did you consider the kind and condition of your wall surface before selecting a paint?
4. Did you read the label of the paint can to see that it is compatible with your wall surface?

5. Does the paint can label have a warranty?
6. Does the paint can label have instructions on how to prepare the wall surface and how to apply the paint?

* If you answered all these questions with a yes, you can be assured of getting a high-quality paint job.

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