

Painting and Painting Care



Note: Some imperfections in wall and paint surfaces can be expected. Per Castle Building & Remodeling, Inc. contract the Residential Construction Performance Guidelines as published by the National Association of Home Builders will be used to determine acceptable workmanship. The guidelines state “A nail pop, blister, or other blemish that are readily visible from a distance of 6 feet under normal lighting conditions are considered excessive.

Choosing Your Paint Finish

Even after a homeowner has chosen the perfect color for a room, there's another very important decision to make. With 5 or 6 paint finishes to choose from, you should learn the benefits of each and determine the right one for your job. Should you use flat or satin and why? Browse these tips on selecting the perfect paint finishes for your interior home applications.

Matte Finish

Whether called flat finish or wall paint, this type of interior paint has a matte surface. This paint finish is usually used on interior walls. It's especially good if you have to camouflage small wall bumps, cracks, or other imperfections, as this finish does not reflect light. While some flat paints are advertised as washable today, you may need to touch up scratches or marks by covering with a bit more paint, so be sure you keep some on hand after you've finished painting.

Flat Enamel

Flat enamel is a paint with a durable flat, matte finish. It's a good choice for powder rooms and halls, as it holds up to occasional cleaning.

Eggshell Finish

If you can picture the very low sheen of the shell of an egg, you have an idea of how an eggshell paint finish will appear. With only a slight hint of shine or gloss, it's good for walls and holds up better with cleaning than a flat finish paint.

Satin Finish

Satin finish paint has a smooth, velvety look with a bit more gloss. It is most often used for windows, doors, trim, or ceilings, but can also be used as wall paint. This is particularly suitable for kids' room walls, kitchens, or bathrooms, or in areas which get a lot of traffic. Paint with a satin finish is formulated to hold up to cleaning and light scrubbing.

Semi-Gloss

Semi-gloss paint is most often used on doors, trim, and cabinets in kitchens and bathrooms. It is easily cleaned and lays down a nice, subtle shine, without being too glitzy. Take care with pre-paint preparation work, as poorly prepared surfaces can be a bit distracting when highlighted by a semi-gloss surface.

Gloss

High gloss paints have an almost reflective quality, as their shiny finish mimics the look of enamel or plastic. Though not widely used in home interiors, it is becoming more popular for a dramatic look on

cabinets, trim, and furniture in very formal and very contemporary settings. This finish will magnify any surface imperfections, so careful preparation and sanding is essential before painting with high gloss paints.

Cleanability and Durability

While most manufacturers have developed all paint finishes with good cleaning qualities, a general rule is that the shinier the paint finish, the better it will stand up to washing and cleaning.

Kid-Friendly Finishes

When painting children's rooms, many painters recommend using an eggshell or satin paint on the walls and semi-gloss for doors and moldings. These finishes are formulated to better withstand repeated cleanings.

Rustic Looks

In order to give a worn or old look, use flat finish paints for walls or furniture. If cleanability is an issue, you might select a flat enamel for trim or an eggshell finish for walls.

High Gloss Looks

Rather than choosing a high gloss paint for a whole room, use it sparingly in select locations, such as doors and trim. The brilliant surface can appear a bit cold and uninviting. Remember to spend extra time preparing the surfaces to be painted glossy, as this finish tends to really point out any surface imperfections.

Ceiling Paint

If you're looking for a basic white ceiling, you can buy pre-mixed, matte finish paints off the shelf at almost any paint or home improvement store. Because cleanability or coverage is not a particularly important consideration, some ceiling paints use cheaper formulations. If you need an exact color match for the color scheme of your room, choose regular tinted flat wall paint.

Ceiling Finishes

Ceilings in most rooms are painted with a flat finish paint. You could also select an eggshell finish if the surface of the ceiling is flawless. Choose a glossier finish for good light reflection, but only if the ceiling is newly resurfaced and has no blemishes.

Kitchens and Baths

Any room, such as a kitchen or bathroom, that will be exposed to water, splashing, or steam, is best painted with a semi-gloss paint. A guest bath or powder room which will have less-frequent use, could be painted with lower-gloss paint, such as satin or eggshell finish.

Homeowner Done Painting

Many homeowners choose to paint themselves to help save project costs. We have put together some tips to help you understand the responsibilities of acting as the painter on a remodeling project.

The first step is to schedule the painting. Your job as the painter is to work with the Lead Carpenter to schedule the painting. Traditionally painting can occur at two different stages of the project. Painting can happen immediately after sheetrock which eliminates considerable prep, taping, etc. but can lead to nicks, dings, and scratches while the rest of the work goes on. To be safe plan on touching up walls if painting is done early in the project. Painting can also wait until after the rest of the project is complete. This requires more prep and masking but reduces the chance of work related damage.

Part of scheduling the project may be coordinating the delivery of trim and casing in advance of install so you can paint before it is needed by the carpenter.

As the painter it is your job to prepare the space as needed to protect adjacent surfaces and areas. This includes masking windows, taping trim, taping ceilings, using drop cloths, and putting up poly curtain walls if needed or not included in the Castle line-item estimate. Another part of preparing the space is to wipe down the walls and clean the surface to be painted.

After prepping the area to paint there is usually some caulking and spackling of drywall imperfections. Trim and casing also require some touch up to hide nail holes and close gaps at the wall.

Problems with Paint

There are various problems that can occur with painted surfaces. Fading, yellowing, peeling, cracking, sagging and wrinkling are the most common issues and all can be easily fixed.

Fading

Fading is described as premature and/or excessive lightening of the paint color, which can occur on surfaces with sunny exposures. This is relatively easy to see because hidden areas such as eaves will not usually fade. Fading/poor color retention can also be a result of chalking of the coating (e.g. primer, paint or stain).

Possible Cause

- Colors will fade slightly when exposed to intense sunlight. As the coating ages, the fading can become more noticeable. Slight fading is acceptable, provided it is gradual and uniform so as not to be noticeable. Excessive chalking of the paint film will cause colors to appear lighter.
- Interior-grade colorants used outside will fade.
- Adding more tint to the coating than is recommended.
- Interior coatings may also fade if they are near windows and there is significant sunlight exposure.

Solution

If the substrate is in good condition except for fading, clean as needed and repaint using a paint that is fade-resistant. Follow label and data page directions for surface preparation for the coating.

Yellowing

Yellowing is defined as the development of a yellow cast in aging paint, most noticeable in the dried films of white paints or clear varnishes.

Possible Cause

- Alkyd/oil based paints, because of their curing mechanism; tend to yellow, particularly in areas that are not exposed to sunlight.
- Oil-based varnishes start with an amber cast and will darken with age.
- Heat from stoves, radiators, and heating ducts.
- Lack of light, for example, behind pictures or appliances and inside closets.
- Tobacco staining or other environmental contaminants.
- Moisture.

Solution

If there are no other problems and the yellowing is not offensive, repainting is not necessary. Repainting using a latex paint will reduce the amount of yellowing, but if the environmental conditions that caused the previous coating to yellow continue, any new coating will likely yellow as well.

Peeling

Peeling is the loss of adhesion of a coating to the substrate (e.g. the surface that was painted) or an earlier coating. Where there is a primer and topcoat or multiple coats of paint, peeling may involve some or all of the coats.

Possible Cause

- Seepage of moisture through uncaulked joints or worn caulk.
- Leaks in roof or walls, or excess moisture escaping through the walls from the interior.
- Painting over a dirty, wet, or glossy surface.
- Painting over a coating that already has marginal adhesion.

Solution

Remove old, loose, cracked caulk; prime as needed; and caulk with the appropriate product.

Find and repair any source of water.

Follow label and data page directions for proper surface preparation methods for the coating.

Test the coating in a 6" to 12" radius around any peeled areas to be sure its adhesion is adequate.

Cracking

Cracking is the splitting of a dry paint film through at least one coat. In its early stages, the problem appears as hairline cracks; in its later stages, flaking occurs.

Possible Cause

- Use of a paint that has lower adhesion and flexibility properties.
- Over-thinning or over-spreading the paint.
- Inadequate surface preparation, or applying the paint to bare wood without first applying a primer.
- Excessive hardening and embrittlement of paint as it ages, the coating loses the ability to expand and contract with temperature and humidity changes.

Solution

Remove loose and flaking paint with a scraper or wire brush, sanding the surface and feathering the edges. If the flaking occurs in multiple layers of paint, use of a spackling compound may be necessary to make a uniform surface. Test the coating surrounding any peeled areas out about 6" to 12" to be sure the adhesion is adequate.

Prime bare wood or plaster before repainting.

Apply the coatings at the recommended spreading rate (e.g. the recommended total area that can be painted) and using the recommended thinning rate (e.g. the recommended percentage that a coating may be diluted).

Sagging

Sagging is downward “drooping” of the paint film immediately after application, resulting in an uneven coating.

Possible Cause

- Application of too heavy a coat of paint.
- Application in excessively humid and/or cool conditions.
- Application of over thinned paint.
- Painting over a glossy surface, which does not provide enough of a profile to which the coating to adhere to.
- Painting over a surface contaminant.

Solution

If paint is still wet, immediately brush out or re-roll to redistribute the excess evenly. If the paint has dried, sand and reapply a new coat of paint.

Do not thin the paint unless recommended on the label or data page.

Follow label and data page directions for the appropriate environmental conditions for the coating.

Sand glossy surfaces dull to provide a profile for the coating to adhere to.

Follow label and data page directions for the appropriate spreading rate (e.g., the recommended total area that can be painted) for the product. Two coats of paint at the recommended spread rate are better than one heavy coat.

Wrinkling

Wrinkling is a rough, crinkled paint surface, which occurs when uncured paint forms a “skin.”

Possible Cause

- Paint applied too heavily.
- Painting under extremely hot conditions or cool damp conditions, which causes the paint film to dry faster on top than on the bottom.
- Exposure of uncured paint to rain, dew, fog, or high humidity levels.
- Applying topcoat of paint to insufficiently cured primer or first coat of paint.
- Painting over contaminated surface (e.g., dirt or wax).

Solution

Scrape or sand to remove the wrinkled coating; sand the surface smooth to blend it in to the surrounding coating. Make sure the surface is thoroughly clean. If needed, prime bare areas with the appropriate primer, allowing it to dry completely. Reapply the coating following the label and data page instructions for spreading rate and environmental conditions.