

# GLOSSARY OF PAINT TERMS

**ABRASION RESISTANCE:** Resistance to being worn away by rubbing or friction; related more to toughness than to hardness. A necessary quality for floor finishes, enamels and varnishes.

**ABRASIVE:** Used for wearing away a surface by rubbing. Examples are powdered pumice, rottenstone, sandpaper, steel wool.

**ADHESION:** The ability of a coating to stick to a surface.

**AEROSOL:** A product feature that uses compressed gas to spray the product from its container.

**AIRLESS SPRAY:** A spray that increases the fluid pressure of paint by means of a pump that causes atomization with air, resulting in higher film build and little or no over-spray.

**ALKALI:** A substance such as lye, soda or lime that can be highly destructive to paint films.

**ALKYD:** Synthetic resin modified with oil for good adhesion to a clean surface and good gloss, color retention and flexibility. Slow drying.

**ALLIGATORING:** Condition of paint film where surface is cracked and develops an appearance similar to alligator skin.

**ALUMINUM PAINT:** A paint that includes aluminum particles and gives a metallic finish when dried.

**ANCHORING:** Mechanical bonding of a coating to a rough surface as contrasted with adhesion, which is chemical bonding.

**ANTI-CORROSIVE PAINT:** Metal paint designed to inhibit corrosion. Applied directly to metal.

**ANTIQUÉ FINISH:** A finish usually applied to furniture or woodwork to give the appearance of age.

**BACK PRIMED:** When a coat of paint is applied to the back of woodwork and exterior siding to prevent moisture from entering the wood and causing the grain to swell.

**BENZENE:** Powerful but highly toxic and flammable solvent, usually restricted to spray application.

**BENZINE:** Often used as a lacquer diluent. Highly volatile and a fire hazard in shipping and storing.

**BINDER:** Film-forming ingredient in paint that binds the pigment particles together.

**BLEACHING:** The process of restoring discolored or stained wood to its normal color or making it lighter.

**BLEEDING:** Undercoat staining through the topcoat.

**BLISTERING:** The formation of bubbles or pimples on the painted surface caused by moisture in the wood by painting before the previous coat has dried thoroughly or by excessive heat or grease under the paint.

**BLUSHING:** A gloss film turning flat or a clear lacquer turning white, usually caused by moisture condensation during the drying process.

**COLORANT:** Concentrated color that can be added to paints to make a specific color.

**COLORFAST:** Fade resistant.

**COLOR UNIFORMITY:** Ability of a coating to maintain a uniform or consistent color across its entire surface, particularly during the weathering process.

**CONTACT CEMENT:** Completely non-staining cement. Ideal for applying wall paneling and for covering counters, cabinets and table tops with both porous and non-porous surfacing materials ranging from linoleum to plastic laminates.

**COPPER STAINING:** Usually caused by corrosion of copper screens, gutters or downspouts washing down on painted surfaces. Can be prevented by painting or varnishing the copper.

**COVERAGE:** The area over which a given amount of paint will spread and hide the previous surface. (Usually expressed in square feet per gallon).

**CRACKING:** The type of paint failure characterized by breaks in irregular lines wide enough to expose the underlying surface.

**CRAWLING:** Varnish defect in which poor adhesion of varnish to surface in some spots causes it to gather up in globs.

**CRAZING:** Small, interlacing cracks on surface of finish.

**CREOSOTE:** A type of liquid coating made from coal tar that is used as a wood preservative. It should not be used on wood that will be painted later.

**CURING:** Final conversion or drying of a coating material.

**BODY:** The thickness or thinness of a liquid paint.

**BOXING:** Mixing paint by pouring from one container to another several times to ensure thorough mixing.

**BREATHE:** The ability of a paint film to permit the passage of moisture vapor without causing blistering, cracking, or peeling.

**BRIDGING:** Ability of paint to span small gaps or cracks through its cohesion and elastic qualities.

**BRISTLE:** The working part of a brush containing natural bristles (usually hog hair) or artificial bristles (nylon or polyester).

**BRUSHABILITY:** The ability or ease with which paint can be brushed.

**BRUSH MARKS:** Marks of brush that remain in the dried paint film.

**BRUSH-OUT:** A technique sometimes used to influence a large sale that consists of brushing out a sample of paint onto a slab of wood or other material so the customer can see how the finished job will look.

**BUBBLES:** Air bubbles in a drying paint film caused by excessive brushing during application or by over vigorous mixing that results in air trapment.

**BUILD:** Thickness or depth of a paint film.

**BURNING IN:** Repairing a finish by melting stick shellac into the damaged places by using a heated knife blade or iron.

**BURNISHING:** Shiny or lustrous spots on a paint surface caused by rubbing.

**CALCIMINE:** A water-thinned paint composed essentially of calcium carbonate or clay glue.

**CAMEL HAIR:** Trade name for tail hair from various types of Russian squirrels. Used for signwriter, lacquering brushings and lettering quills.

**CATALYST:** An ingredient that speeds up a chemical reaction; sometimes used in two component paint systems.

**CAULKING COMPOUND:** A semidrying or slow drying plastic material used to seal joints or fill crevices around windows, chimneys.

**CHALKING:** The formation of a loose powder on the surface of paint after exposure to the elements.

**CHECKING:** A kind of paint failure in which many small cracks appear in the surface of the paint.

**CLEAR COATING:** A transparent protective and/or decorative film.

**COALESCING:** The settling or drying of an emulsion paint as the water evaporates.

**COATING:** paint, varnish, lacquer or other finish used to create a protective and/or decorative layer.

**COHESION:** Attraction of molecules within a coating (how it holds together).

**DURABILITY:** The ability of paint to last or hold up well against the destructive agents such as weather, sunlight, detergents, air pollution, abrasion or marring.

**DYE, DYESTUFF:** A colored material used just to dye or change color with little or no hiding of the underlying surface.

**EFFLORESCENCE:** A deposit of salts that remain on the surface of masonry, brick or plaster when water has evaporated.

**EGGSHELL FINISH:** The degree of gloss between a flat and gloss finish.

**EMULSION PAINT:** Paint in which particles are suspended in water or oil with the aid of an emulsifier as in latex paint.

**ENAMEL:** Broad classification paints that dry to a hard finish. They may be flat, gloss or semi-gloss.

**EPOXY:** Clear finish having excellent adhesion qualities; extremely abrasion and chemical resistant. Epoxies are alcohol proof and very water-resistant.

**EROSION:** The wearing away of a paint film caused by exposure to the weather.

**ETCH:** Surface preparation by chemical means to improve the adhesion of coating.

**EXTENDER:** Inexpensive and inert pigment added to paint for bulk and to lower costs.

**EXTERIOR:** The outside surfaces of a structure.

## GLOSSARY OF PAINT TERMS

**CUSTOM COLOR:** Special colors made by adding colorant to paint or by intermixing colors, which permits the retailer to match a color selected by the consumer.

**CUTTING IN:** Careful painting of an edge such as wall color at the ceiling line or at the edge of woodwork.

**DISTRESSING:** Treatment of furniture, usually in the process of being antiqued, in order to make it appear older than it is. Consists of marring the surface or applying specks of glaze before varnishing.

**DRIER:** A paint ingredient that aids the drying or hardening of the film.

**DRY DUST FREE:** That stage of drying when particles of dust that settle upon the surface do not stick to the paint film.

**DRY TACK FREE:** That stage of drying when the paint no longer feels sticky or tacky when lightly touched.

**DRY TO HANDLE:** That stage of drying when a paint film has hardened sufficiently so the object or surface painted may be used without marring.

**DRY TO RECOAT:** That stage of drying when the next coat can be applied.

**DRY TO SAND:** That stage of drying when a paint film can be sanded without the sandpaper sticking or clogging.

**FLAT APPLICATOR:** A rectangular shaped flat pad with an attached handle that is used to paint shingles, shakes and other special surfaces and areas.

**FLEXIBILITY:** Ability of a coating to expand and contract during temperature changes.

**FLOATING:** Separation of pigment colors on the surface of applied paint.

**FLOW:** The ability of a coating to level out and spread into a smooth film, paints that have a good flow usually level out uniformly and exhibit few brush or roller marks.

**FUNGICIDE:** An agent that helps prevent mold or mildew growth on paint.

**GALVANIZED:** A thin coating of zinc that covers iron or steel to prevent rust.

**GLAZE:** A term used to describe several types of finishing materials. (1) Glazing putty is of a creamy consistency and is applied to fill imperfections in the surface. (2) A glazing stain is a pigmented stain applied over a stained, filled or painted surface to soften or blend the original color without obscuring it. (3) A glaze coat is a clear finish applied over previously coated surfaces to create a gloss finish.

**GLAZING COMPOUND:** putty used to set glass in window frames and to fill nail holes and cracks.

**GLOSS:** The luster or shininess of paints and coatings are generally classified as flat, semi-gloss, or gloss; the latter has the higher reflecting ability.

**GLOSS METER:** A standard scale for measuring the shininess or light reflectance of paint. Different brands with the same description such as semi-gloss or flat may have quite different ratings on the gloss meter.

**GRAIN RAISING:** Swelling and standing up of the wood grain caused by absorbed water and solvents.

**GRAINING:** Simulating the grain of wood by means of specially prepared colors or stains and the use of graining tools or special brushing techniques.

**GROUND COAT:** The base coat in an antiquing system that is applied before the graining colors, glazing or other finish coat.

**HARDBOARD:** Reconstituted natural wood, fabricated by reducing natural wood to fibers and then pressing the fibers together into panels of various thickness'.

**HARDNESS:** The ability of a paint film to resist denting, scratching or marring.

**HIDING POWER:** The ability of a paint to hide the previous surface or color.

**HOLDOUT:** The ability of a paint film to dry to its normal finish on a somewhat absorptive surface.

**HOLIDAYS:** Voids in the dried paint film.

**HOT SPOTS:** Lime spots, which are not completely cured and bleed through the coating on a plastered wall.

**FADING:** The loss of color due to exposure to light, heat or weathering.

**FEATHER SANDING:** Tapering the edge of dried paint film with sandpaper.

**FERRULE:** The metal band that connects the handle and stock of a paintbrush.

**FILLER:** A product used to fill the pores of wood before applying a prime of finish coat.

**FILLER STRIPS:** Strips made from specially treated wood, metal. Fiber or plastic in the center of a paintbrush, creating a reservoir of paint, thereby greatly increasing the paint carrying capacity.

**FILM:** Layer or coat of paint or other finish.

**FINISH COAT:** Last coat of paint or other finish.

**FLAKING:** A form of paint failure characterized by the detachment of small pieces of the film from the surface of previous coat of paint. Cracking or blistering usually precedes it.

**FLASH POINT:** The temperature at which a coating or solvent will ignite.

**FLAT:** A paint surface that scatters or absorbs the light falling on it so as to be substantially free from gloss or sheen.

**INHIBITOR:** Material such as primer used to retard rusting or corrosion.

**INTERCOAT ADHESION:** The adhesion between two coats of paint.

**INTERIOR:** The inside surfaces of a structure.

**INTERMEDIATE COAT:** The coating between the primer and finish often called a barrier coat.

**JOINT CEMENT:** Cement used for drywall construction; also used as a bedding compound for joint tape and as a filler for nail holes.

**JOINT TAPE:** Special paper or paper-faced cotton tape used over joints between wallboard to conceal the joint and provide a smooth surface for painting.

**KALSOMINE:** See Calcimine.

**LACQUER:** A fast-drying clear pigmented coating that dries by solvent evaporation.

**LAP:** To lay or place one coat so its edge extends over and covers the edge of a previous coat, causing an increased film thickness.

**LATEX:** A water-thinned paint, such as a polyvinyl acetate, styrene butadiene or acrylic.

**LEVELING:** Ability of a film to flow out free from ripples, pockmarks and brush marks after application.

**LIFTING:** The softening and penetration of a previous film by solvents in the paint being applied over it, resulting in raising and wrinkling.

**LIGHTFASTNESS:** No loss of color due to exposure to light, heat or weathering.

**LINSEED OIL:** A drying oil used in paint, varnish and lacquer.

**MARINE VARNISH:** Varnish specially designed for immersion in water and exposure to marine atmosphere.

**MASKING:** Temporary covering of areas not to be painted.

**MASKING TAPE:** A strip of paper or cloth similar to adhesive tape, which can be easily removed, used to temporarily cover areas that are not to be painted.

**MASTIC:** A heavy-bodied paste like coating of high build often applied with a trowel.

**METALLICS:** A class of paints that include metal flakes in their composition.

**MILDEW RESISTANCE:** The ability of a coating to resist the growth of molds and mildew. Mildew is particularly prevalent in moist, humid and warm climates.

**MILDEWCIDE:** An agent that helps prevent molds or mildew growth on paint.

## GLOSSARY OF PAINT TERMS

**MINERAL SPIRITS:** Paint thinners or solvents derived from petroleum.

**NAILHEAD RUSTING:** Rust from iron nails that penetrates or bleeds through the coating and stains the surrounding areas.

**NAP:** The length of fibers in a paint roller cover.

**NONVOLATILE:** The portion of paint left after the solvent evaporates; sometimes called the solids content.

**OIL STAINS:** There are two types of oil stains, penetrating and non-penetrating. Penetrating oil stains contain dyes and resins that penetrate the surface; non-penetrating oil stains contain larger amounts of pigments and are usually opaque or transparent.

**OPACITY:** The ability of a paint to hide the previous surface or color.

**OPAQUE COATING:** A coating that hides the previous surface coating.

**ORANGE PEEL:** Film having the roughness of an orange due to poor roller or spray application.

**PAINT GAUGE:** Instrument for measuring the thickness of paint film.

**PAINT REMOVER:** A compound that softens old paint or varnish and permits scraping off the loosened material.

**PATCHING PLASTER:** A special plaster made for repairing plaster walls.

**PEELING:** Detachment of a dried paint film in relatively large pieces, usually caused by moisture or grease under the painted surface.

**PIGMENTS:** Paint ingredients mainly used to impart color and hiding power.

**PIHNOLE:** Very small holes in paint film, usually not deep enough to show undercoat.

**PLASTER OF PARIS:** A quick setting, pure white powder, used to set bathroom wall fixtures such as towel racks or used by craft groups for pouring molds and making plaster objects.

**POLYURETHANE:** Wide range of coatings, ranging from hard gloss enamels to soft flexible coatings. Good to very good adhesion, hardness, flexibility and resistance. Surface preparation critical.

**POLYVINYL ACETATE:** A synthetic resin largely used as a vehicle for many latex paints. Often referred to as PVA.

**POT LIFE:** Amount of time after mixing a two-part paint system during which it can be applied.

**PRIME COAT OR PRIMER:** The first coat or undercoat that helps bind the topcoat to the substrate.

**PROPELLANT:** The gas used to expel materials from aerosol containers.

**PUTTY:** Doughlike mixture of pigment and oil used to set glass in window frames and to fill nail holes and cracks.

**SHELLAC:** Derived from a resinous substance called Lac. Used as a sealer and finish for floors, for sealing knots and other purposes. A natural resin, usually in the form of thin flakes.

**SILICONE:** See Resin.

**SKIN:** Tough covering that forms on paints if container is not tightly sealed.

**SOLIDS:** See Nonvolatile.

**SOLVENT:** The volatile part of paint composition that evaporates during drying.

**SPACKLING COMPOUND:** A material used as crack filler for preparing surfaces before painting.

**SPAR VARNISH:** A very durable varnish designed for service on exterior surfaces.

**SPATTER:** Small particles or drips of liquid paint thrown or expelled when applying paint.

**SPOT PRIMING:** A method of protecting localized spots. The only areas primed are those that require additional protection due to rusting or peeling of the former coat.

**SPRAYING:** A method of application in which the coating material is broken up into a fine mist that is directed onto the surface to be coated.

**SPREADING RATE:** The area to which paint can be spread; usually expressed as square feet per gallon.

**STAIN:** A solution or suspension of coloring matter in a vehicle designed primarily to be applied to create color effects rather than to form a protective coating. A transparent or semi-opaque coating that colors without completely obscuring the grain of the surface.

**REMOVERS:** Substances used to soften old varnish or paint so they may be removed easily.

**RESIN:** A natural or synthetic material that is the main ingredient of paint and that binds ingredients together. It also aids adhesion to the surface.

**ROLLER:** A paint application tool having a revolving cylinder covered with lambs-wool, fabric, foamed plastic or other material.

**ROPINESS:** Paint dries with a stringy look because it did not flow evenly onto the surface.

**RUNS:** Blemished film caused by excessive flow of coating.

**RUST PREVENTATIVE PAINT OR PRIMER:** The first coat of paint applied directly to iron or steel structures to slow down or prevent rust.

**SAGS:** Excessive flow, causing runs or sagging in paint film during application. Usually caused by applying too heavy a coat of paint or thinning too much.

**SAL SODA:** Crystallized sodium carbonate. It is used for making cleaning solutions to remove grease and grime from old painted surfaces.

**SAND FINISH:** Rough finish plaster wall.

**SANDING SURFACES:** A heavily pigmented finishing material used for building the surface to a smooth condition. It is sanded after drying.

**SATIN FINISH:** See Semi-Gloss

**SCRUBBABILITY:** The ability of a paint film to withstand scrubbing and cleaning with water, soap and other household cleaning agents.

**SEALER:** A thin liquid applied to seal a surface, to prevent previous paint from bleeding through from the surface or to prevent undue absorption of the topcoat into the substrate.

**SEEDS:** Small, undesirable particles or granules other than dust found in paint, varnish or lacquer.

**SELF-CLEANING:** Controlled chalking of a paint film so dirt does not adhere to the surface.

**SEMI-GLOSS:** Having a luster between full and flat.

**SEMI-TRANSPARENT:** A degree of hiding greater than transparent but less than opaque.

**SETTLING:** Paint separation in which pigments accumulate at the bottom of the container.

**SET UP:** A film that has dried so that it is firm is said to have "set up".

**SHAKE PAINTER:** A rectangular-shaped flat pad with an attached handle that is used to paint shingles, shakes and other special surfaces and areas.

**SHEEN:** The degree of luster of a dried paint film.

**SHEEN UNIFORMITY:** The even distribution of luster over the entire surface of an applied finish.

**TEXTURE PAINT:** Paint that can be manipulated by brush, roller, trowel or other tool to produce various effects.

**THINNERS:** Solvents used to thin coatings.

**THIXOTROPY:** The property of a material that causes it to change from a thick, pasty consistency to a fluid consistency upon agitation, brushing or rolling.

**TINT BASE:** The basic paint in a custom color system to which colorants are added.

**TONER:** Pigmented lacquer sealer that is applied by spray. Toners provide color and make the surface appear more even.

**TOUCH UP:** The ability of a coating film to be spot repaired (usually within a few months of initial painting) without showing color or gloss differences.

**TURPENTINE:** A colorless liquid, which is used as a thinner for oil paints and varnishes, distilled from the products of the pine tree.

**UNDERCOAT:** A primer or intermediate coating before the finish coating.

**VARNISH:** Transparent liquid that dries on exposure to air to give a decorative and protective and protective coating when applied as a thin film.

**VARNISH STAIN:** Varnishes colored with a dye and without the same power of penetrations as the true stains, leaving a colored coating on the surface.

**VEHICLE:** The liquid portion of paint composed mainly of solvents, resins or oils.

**VINYL:** A resin with poor adhesion but good hardness, flexibility and resistance. Used for swimming pools, tank linings and marine equipment.

## GLOSSARY OF PAINT TERMS

**STIPPLING:** A finish made by using a stippling brush or roller stippler or a newly painted surface before the paint is dry.

**STREAKING:** The irregular occurrence of lines or streaks of various lengths and colors in an applied film; usually caused by some form of contamination.

**STRIP:** Removal of old finishes with paint removers.

**STYRENE-BUTADIENE:** See Resin.

**SUBSTRATE:** Surface to be painted.

**SURFACE TENSION:** The property of a coating that makes it tend to shrink when applied.

**TACK RAG:** A piece of loosely woven cloth that has been dipped into varnish oil and wrung out. When it becomes tacky or sticky, it is used to wipe a surface to remove particles of dust.

**TACKY:** Sticky condition of coating during drying, between wet and dry-to-touch stage.

**TEXTURE:** The roughness or irregularity of a surface.

**WRINKLING:** Development of ridges and furrows in a paint film when the paint dries.

**YELLOWING:** Development of a yellow color or cast in white, a pastel, colored or clear finishes.

**ZINC CHROMATE:** Rust-inhibiting pigment, greenish-yellow in color that is used with a high-hiding pigment.

**ZINC OXIDE:** Substance used as a white pigment for high-hiding power hardness and gloss. Reduces yellowing, increases drying; provides resistance to sulfur fumes and mildew. Used with linseed oil for self-cleaning exterior paints.

**VISCOSITY:** The thickness of a coating as related to its ability to flow as a liquid.

**WASHABILITY:** The ability of a paint to be easily cleaned without wearing away during cleaning.

**WATER EMULSIONS:** Mixture of pigment and synthetic resin in water with low solvent emission, low fire hazard and toxicity and good durability and chemical resistance.

**WATER SPOTTING:** A paint appearance defect caused by water droplets.

**WEATHERING:** The effect of exposure to weather on paint films.

**WET EDGE:** Length of time a wall paint can stand and be brushed back in to the next stretch without showing a lap.

**WITHERING:** Withering a loss of gloss is sometimes caused by varnishing open-pore woods without filling pores, use of improper undercoating or applying top coat before undercoat has dried.

**WOOD FILLER:** There are two kinds of fillers-paste and liquid. Paste fillers are something like a very thick paint and are composed of some solid powdered substance, usually silica or powdered quartz, mixed with linseed oil or varnish thinned with turpentine or benzine.