

D.I.Y. Painting!!!



Unlike most building trades nowadays, a painter and decorator still comes at an affordable price, in most cases you would be better advised letting your staff do what they do best, and employing a professional to do your painting for you, you are unlikely to save very much money (if any at all) by doing it yourself.

It is often difficult to know how good a decorator is before employing one, but it is important that you secure the services of a good decorator. Your lease will usually require that you redecorate your premises on a timely basis and to the landlords' satisfaction. You will wish to avoid having to do all the work again because the landlord deems it to be substandard.

If you must do the work yourself, this leaflet will provide you with useful tips to ensure the work is done to a reasonable standard. Most substandard work results from cutting corners and not following the tried and trusted decorating practices, rather than a lack of skill on the decorators' part.

Use this leaflet if you employ a decorator, to ensure the work is done professionally and that you don't end up paying for substandard work.

Helpful Advice

- **Woodwork**
- **Interior Walls**
- **Exterior Walls**
- **Metalwork**
- **Floors**
- **General Decorating Hints**



S.J. Gartside Property Management Services.

Woodwork

General

Woodwork is likely to be inspected the most keenly by your landlord for fairly obvious reasons. Unprotected woodwork will soon exhibit decay especially where the woodwork is exposed to weathering. Decay is costly to repair, often repair does not halt the process of decay and in some cases replacement is the only solution.

External woodwork will need to be decorated on a timely basis if decay is to be avoided. Unfortunately due to health and safety considerations, today's paints are a poor substitute for paints produced in times gone by, although manufacturers continue to improve their products. External woodwork should be decorated at intervals of no less than three years.

Materials

Your woodwork may have been decorated with a variety of materials, including traditional oil based paints; general purpose stains such as sikkens and decorative treatments such as Sovereign SX70.

The use of traditional oil based paints is divided into 3 distinct phases. A primer is used to penetrate the surface of the timber, thereby providing good adhesion and a surface that will allow subsequent layers of paint to adhere. An undercoat, which is generally the body of the paint, it provides thickness and ensures an even colouration when the final coat is applied. A Gloss, which provides the final colour and finish, this coat of paint protects against weathering.

General purpose stains such as sikkens work in much the same way as traditional oil based paints, where successive layers build up to produce a decorative and protective coating.

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Decorative treatments are somewhat different in approach, they are still applied in several coats, but unlike paints and general purpose stains they are absorbed into the timber. They perform as preservatives and not protective coatings; they contain powerful fungicides to stop rot and staining, and other compounds to resist water and the effects of U.V. light. The wood is allowed to breathe and the product does not crack, peel or blister as with paint and general purpose stains.

Over the last ten years, new woodwork in our properties has been decorated with decorative treatments rather than paints, for better protection and ease of maintenance.

Previously painted woodwork should continue to be decorated with oil based paints, but where SX70 has been used, it should be used again. Sikkens and other general purpose stains should never be used on your landlord woodwork.

Repairing Rotted Areas

It's important to repair any soft or rotten woodwork before redecorating. It is probably best that a tradesman carries out this work; your decorator or yourself should not attempt it without the necessary skills and experience.

You may want to consider whether the item is worth repairing, the cost of installing a pre-manufactured replacement, may be considerably less than the cost of repair.

Remove the rotted timber with a mallet and chisel, or saw out the larger sections, then patch the damaged area with new wood. Cut the new piece of wood to size, coat with clear wood preservative and allow to dry. Screw and glue the new piece into place.

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It is important to ensure all rotted wood has been removed; good practice would be to remove a larger section than might appear necessary. If rot has affected a joint, it is not satisfactory to simply patch the affected area, remove enough timber each side of the joint, so as to retain the structural integrity of the item you are repairing. Generally new timber should be spliced in (cut at an angle) to avoid gaps occurring between new and old.

Preservatives should be of good quality, they should contain fungicides (such as Cuprinol 5 star treatment) to deter further rot, and they should not be water based.

Screws and other fixings should be galvanized or zinc plated.

PVA glues are not suitable, you should use good quality wood glues such as Cascamite, or where the repair is susceptible to water, Cascaphen.

Use an exterior grade wood filler to fill any smaller holes or cracks and to seal any gaps around the new and old timber. If the item is to be decorated with SX70, use suitably coloured filler.

Always let some of the filler protrude above the surface as it often shrinks as it dries. Sand smooth the repair using a 100 grade paper or finer.

Preparation

For previously painted surfaces, remove any flaking paint with a scraper and abrasive paper. Surfaces that have been painted many times may require stripping. (see **paint stripping**)

Sand down the woodwork to flatten blisters or old drip marks, using non-clogging paper for a quicker result. The use a random orbit sander can speed up the sanding if you have a large area to prepare for painting, these sanders can be useful on flat areas such as plywood doors, but are generally ineffective on tongue and groove boarding, where the boards have usually curled slightly and the sander does not sit flat on the board.

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The sanding process should continue until blisters and blemishes have been removed and the surface has been sufficiently roughened to provide a key for new paint. Once sanding is complete inspect for and fill any cracks and small holes with filler, external filler should be used on external surfaces, standard fillers may provide a better finish for interior areas. Sand these areas once again when the filler is dry and repeat until the surfaces are smooth and free from imperfection.

Finally clean the painted surfaces thoroughly with warm soapy water or sugar soap and a nylon pad to get rid of any of dirt and grease. Bare timbers should be wiped with a cloth dampened with white spirit to take off any sanding dust.

For surfaces previously treated with SX70, sand down the woodwork lightly with a very fine paper (240 or finer), Once sanding is complete inspect for and fill any cracks and small holes with filler, use a suitably coloured filler. Sand these areas once again when the filler is dry and repeat until the surfaces are smooth and free from imperfection. A random orbit sander should never be used, it creates small circular scratches, which will show through when decorating is completed.

Finally clean the surfaces thoroughly with warm soapy water or sugar soap and a nylon pad to get rid of any of dirt and grease.

Sealing

Brush knotting compound over any knots to stop them showing through and ruining the new paintwork. Any dead knots should have already been prised out and filled with an appropriate filler.

For previously painted items , seal all the remaining bare wood with an oil based primer; in domestic situations interior surfaces are often sealed with acrylic primers for speed, these are not appropriate for industrial premises and should not be used.

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For items previously treated with SX70, seal all the remaining bare wood with SX70. (enough coats should be applied at this time to match the colour of the new wood to the old, however be aware that SX70 will darken with time and the new wood should be slightly lighter)

Mastics and Putties

Remove any loose or defective mastics and putties around windows and doors.

Single glazed windows should be re-puttied with linseed oil putty, double glazed units will require a butyl compound to allow for movement.

Pre mixed mastic is available, but ideally mastic should be replaced by mixing mastic powder with double boiled linseed oil to produce a stiff but not dry mastic.

Prior to replacing putties and mastics brush linseed oil into the surfaces where they will be applied. Any new mastic and putty should be allowed to cure properly before painting is commenced, this may take two to three weeks, so you will need to make sure your woodwork is properly sealed. Once properly cured, seal using either oil based primer or SX70, as appropriate.

Painting

For previously painted woodwork, check the instructions on the can of your chosen topcoat and apply the undercoat recommended. Let the paint dry and then apply the gloss coat.

Choose a colour that closely matches the original, but is coded with a BS number rather than a name (i.e., BS 017 rather than Fred's flaming red).

Try to use only the top third of the brush and start with smooth vertical stokes. Then brush the paint out horizontally and finish off with light brush strokes in the direction of the wood grain.

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A small brush with an angled bristle top is best for painting narrow beadings or around small window panes.

Try to tackle one frame or panel at a time. Don't take a break halfway through painting - you will create a line between the old and new paint.

Paint tongue and groove board singly or in small groups, start at the top and work your way to the bottom before starting the next board or group of boards.

Follow the manufacturers instructions, the undercoat must be dry before applying the gloss, but it should also not be left too long, drying conditions may vary depending on the weather.

Cut down on brush cleaning by simply putting the bristles of your brushes in a bucket of water overnight. This will keep them pliable and ready to use the next morning. Dry off with a cloth before starting work.

If it becomes necessary to recoat the gloss coat, remember to allow at least 10 days before sanding. The paint may be touch dry, but will remain soft for some time, if you try to sand your gloss coat too soon, the paint will drag and you will cause yourself an awful lot more work.

For woodwork previously treated with SX70, apply at least 3 coats of SX70. Let each coat dry before applying the next.

Use a similar technique to oil based paint above, however SX70 is less viscous than oil based paint and can be applied much more quickly, don't be tempted to overload your brush as runs will develop.

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Paint Stripping

You can strip paint by using either a chemical paint stripper or a heat gun. Using chemicals is realistically the only way to approach the job if you have no experience of using a heat gun, although it will be time consuming and costly.

Heat guns are either electrically or gas operated, you should only use a gas fuelled heat gun if you have sufficient experience, otherwise you will end up scorching or even burning the wood. Electrically operated heat guns are much more forgiving, although they do take considerably longer to do the job. On the other hand if you have paid a tradesman to work for you, and he produces anything other than a gas fuelled heat gun, you would wise to question his ability.

Chemical paint stripper, have a bucket of cold water handy in case of accidents. Wear rubber gloves and long sleeves to protect your skin and goggles if you need to work overhead.

Leave the stripper to soften the paint until the surface layers can be easily scraped off - test it every few minutes. Remove any paint from shaped areas with a shaped scraper called a spokeshave and a coarse nylon abrasive pad. Work on no more than about half a square metre (1/2 yd) of woodwork at a time so that the stripper does not evaporate before you have scraped off the paint.

When you have scraped off as much paint as possible, neutralise the stripper with plenty of warm water or white spirit (follow the maker's instructions). Rub over the surface with a nylon pad to clean off the paint residue and allow to dry for at least 24 hours before painting.

Paint stripping with an electric heat gun, heat guns use a lot of electric current so always fully unwind any extension lead so that it doesn't overheat. If you're working indoors, make sure it's in a well-ventilated room.

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Only use a heat gun on flat areas of wood, such as door panels, because the heat can scorch delicate mouldings. Keep the gun moving gently about 50mm (2in) from the surface and scrape away the paint when it begins to bubble. You can fit a heat shield to the nozzle to protect glass from the heat when stripping window frames.

Paint stripping with a gas fuelled heat gun, do not use this type of equipment unless you have sufficient experience. If you have the experience to use a gas fuelled heat gun, you don't need advice on how to do so.

Interior Walls

General

The interior walls of your premises will probably be brick or block, in some cases office walls may be plastered, you will need to approach each situation with an entirely different approach.

Materials

Brick and blockwork, in virtually all cases the only material you will need to consider is a good quality obliterating emulsion (such as Johnstone's JonMatt) Lesser quality emulsions will cost less per can, but you will need many more cans and have to recoat the walls several times

Plastered surfaces, in many areas the same emulsion you used for your brick and blockwork walls will do the trick, however check what has been used previously, you may need a silk finish in kitchen and toilet areas, or even an egg-shell, retain current colour schemes.

Equipment

Brick and blockwork, you may be tempted to spray your brick and blockwork walls, forget it. Conventional spray systems do not work with emulsion paints, you would need to use an airless spray. You would waste endless hours trying to mask the areas you don't want painted and even more hours cleaning up after yourself. You would need to recoat several times and you will use 3 times more paint than you need.

If the walls are not very rough, you may be able to use a roller, in which case get a roller you can easily handle, you will have to apply considerable pressure to paint this type of surface, a 15" roller is probably as big as you need.

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Even with a roller you will need a brush to cut in corners and touch up what the roller misses. Again, get a brush you can handle, 4" is probably adequate, but a 6" is manageable on less rough walls. Always use a masonry brush; others will wear away in a short time.

You may find your only option is to use a brush, this surprises many people, but it is not uncommon to see people waste many hours trying to make a roller work, only to resort to the brush eventually.

With the right equipment a previously painted wall will only need one coat.

Plastered surfaces, are usually best painted with a 7" – 9" roller and a 2" brush for cutting in and in working in corners.

Preparation

You will need to remove all fixings from the walls before you start, unscrew screws to avoid pulling large pieces of wall away with them. Plastic rawl plugs can be removed with long nose pliers.

Brick and blockwork, this type of wall will collect a large amount of dust, especially in the mortar joints, if it is not removed, it will mix with and discolour your paint when you apply it. Compressed air usually only moves the dust to another surface, but can be effective if you are prepared to do the walls several times. A sweeping brush worked both horizontally and vertically will often suffice, but a hosepipe is by far the most effective, where the walls are heavily soiled. A pressure washer is likely to remove previous layers of paint and so is usually counter productive, requiring additional coats of paint when painting takes place. If you do use a hosepipe, you should avoid getting water near electrical items, brush excess water out of the premises straight away, if the floor dries, the dirt will stick and need to be washed away again. Don't forget the tops of pillars; dust from these areas will end up in your paint as well.

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Fill holes with a mixture of sand and cement, mix small quantities at about one part cement to three parts sand, this will ensure a reasonably stiff filler that doesn't take too long to dry.

For a small quantity of holes you may want to apply the filler with your finger only, this produces by far the best result. For a greater number of holes, use a small trowel (3" to 4") to apply the filler, to save wearing your finger away.

For holes in the bricks or blocks themselves, finish the filling by dragging the blade of your trowel across the holes at around 90°, and not at a shallow angle, this will ensure the filler finishes flush with the surface and not spread on top of it.

For holes in the mortar joints between the bricks or blocks, use the rounded end of the trowel handle to make a neat finish.

Before the filler dries completely brush over with a small soft hand brush.

Some large holes may need filling more than once, don't be tempted to leave the filler proud, this is cement, you cannot simply sand it away. If a hole needs filling more than once, leave a rough finish the first time so the cement will key to it on the second application. If a hole is large enough to need filling twice, you will probably be wise to paint over it when it is dry, to ensure it covers properly when you eventually paint the whole wall.

Plastered surfaces, pick out the loose areas of plaster with your filling knife and repair these and other damaged areas with plaster filler. Work methodically over the whole room to make sure you have treated all the damaged areas.

When the filler is dry, use an electric sander or sanding block to smooth any rough areas of plaster and blend in the new repairs. Very powdery plasterwork or new bare plaster should be coated with a coat of plaster sealer.

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Cracks around the skirting boards and door frames will spoil your new finish. Rake out any chipped paint and fill the gaps with a flexible decorator's sealant.

Wash off any black mould with a solution of household bleach and leave to dry. Heavy mould or tobacco stains should be covered with a sealer coat of Anti-Damp Paint.

Painting

Brick and blockwork, apply with a firm pressure and aim to cover a small area completely, rather than larger areas with the need to overpaint each time. If a roller is used, working in a team, one with a roller and one with a brush works well. The use of well loaded equipment will ensure one coat coverage, but runs and spillages should be guarded against.

Plastered surfaces, Use a 50mm (2in) brush to paint around the ceiling edge and along the top of the skirting boards. Make a neat edge around any features like window frames.

Dip the brush a third of the way into the paint and use long continuous sweeps of the brush edge to form a neat line.

With a wide brush or roller, fill in the remaining areas. A roller gives the best finish and is quicker. Work from the top right-hand corner of the first wall and work in square metre sections.

If you use a roller, use a short pile for smooth walls and a medium pile for covering textured surfaces. Evenly cover the roller with paint from the tray and work diagonally in a criss-cross pattern.

Exterior Walls

General

The exterior walls are not usually painted, in situations where they have been painted previously employ a similar method of preparation and application as used on internal brick and blockwork walls.

Materials

Emulsion should not be used on external surfaces. Choosing a good quality high build textured masonry paint (such as Johnstone's JonTex) to match the existing colour will ensure a one coat finish.

Metalwork

General

Internal metalwork is usually finished only with primer, external areas may have decorative finishes, you should choose a finish to match the existing.

Materials

There is a wide range of products available for coating metal surfaces in wide range of situations.

Although many surfaces have been previously painted with red oxide paint, many readily available red oxide paints have become less than durable as a result of health and safety regulations. Red oxide primer is available in many shapes and forms, a good quality paint will contain zinc and alkyd resins, as a rule of thumb, if you can clean your brushes in white spirit you should probably avoid using the product, a quality metal primer will require you clean brushes in thinners.

General oil based gloss and undercoat paint or readily available metal paints can be applied to most metal primers as a decorative coating, test a small area to ensure compatibility before beginning.

Galvanised surfaces will not readily accept paint unless chemically weathered, alternatively a coat of calcium plumbate paint will work as a primer on these surfaces.

Preparation

Brush away any loose rust and flaking paint with a wire brush and smooth all rough areas with abrasive paper. Metal surfaces are very smooth and need a primer to key the surface so that the topcoat will brush on evenly. Coat all new metal or exposed areas of rust with a metal primer. Previously painted metal work should be cleaned with warm soapy water and left to dry.

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Application

In most situations application by brush will be the most practical, metal paints are usually highly viscous and should be worked with quickly with firm even brush strokes. Brushes should not be left long before cleaning, do not use plastic containers for paints or cleaning materials. Likewise avoid contact with plastic surfaces while painting.

Floors

General

Your premises are for commercial use, domestic oil based floor paints may provide a decorative finish initially, but will prove to be less than durable over a period of time. A 2 pack epoxy floor coating is recommended for commercial premises; advice from the manufacturer on preparation and application of this type of coating should be followed closely.

Materials

2 pack epoxy floor coatings are available in water based and solvent based forms. Water based products are for areas of light to moderate traffic only, solvent based products should be used where traffic is heavier and the use of stacker trucks, palette trucks and other vehicles are anticipated.

2 pack products comprise of a base and an activator, which are mixed together prior to use, these are usually supplied together in pre-measured quantities, but check with your supplier before purchasing.

Preparation

The preparation of the floor should be carried out according to the manufacturers instructions. Proper preparation is essential and should not be approached lightly.

Generally preparation will require the surface to be painted is sound, clean, dry and free from dust and other contaminants, in particular, oil, grease, curing compounds, release agents, chalk, mildew, efflorescence and loose or flaking material. If the floor has been power floated or has excess lime on the surface, use an approved acid solution to etch the floor to provide a suitable key. Previous paint coatings must be clean and abraded if necessary. Ensure the surface is completely dry prior to application.

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Application

2 pack products should only be mixed and applied in accordance with manufacturers instructions.

Overall Warnings:

These products are highly flammable, you should keep them away from all sources of ignition.

They contain VOC's (volatile organic compounds)

- Wear protective clothing and do not allow contact with the skin.
- Use protective goggles and do not allow contact with the eyes.
- Wear suitable cartridge or air fed respiratory equipment.
- Do not empty the product or cleaning fluid into the drains.

Once mixed the ingredients will create gas, do not replace lids on tins as they may explode.

Ensure you obtain a health and safety leaflet about the product at the time of purchase and read it thoroughly.

General Decorating Hints

- Always follow manufacturers instructions
- Don't work from ladders, use suitable scaffolding at heights
- Use dust sheets or other protection for floors etc
- Try to paint on dry days and avoid damp conditions
- Break new brushes in before use
- Don't allow brushes to stand on the bristles in water or cleaning agents
- Clean brushes by working from the stock to the end of the bristles
- Replace lids firmly on tins overnight
- Store rollers overnight in a sealed moistened plastic bag
- Remove or loosen switches and sockets with the power off
- Use paint products in a well ventilated room
- Wash hands well before meals and breaks