



HOW TO REPAINT A STEEL GARAGE DOOR

The factory-applied finish on steel garage doors is a baked-on coating designed to give years of trouble-free performance. However, if you desire to clean, touch up, or repaint the steel door, here are a few tips from the experts at AkzoNobel, a leading global paints and coatings company.

Best practices for cleaning painted surfaces

While factory-applied finishes will last many years longer than ordinary paints, it is desirable to clean these doors routinely. To maintain the original finish of steel garage doors, the only regular maintenance necessary is an annual washing. Discoloration may occur when the door has been continually exposed to dirt-laden atmospheres, and strong sunlight may cause slight chalking. A good cleaning will generally restore the appearance of these coatings, making repainting unnecessary.

Simple cleaning solutions can be mixed for regular cleaning. Use one cup of Simple Green—or other common nontoxic/biodegradable cleaner—dissolved into two gallons of warm water. Alternatively, use one

cup of household ammonia dissolved into five gallons of water. Important: Never mix bleach with cleansers or detergents.

Working from the bottom to the top of the door panels, wash the steel door with either solution. Wipe the door with a well-soaked cloth, sponge, very soft bristled brush, or *low-pressure* spray washer. Do not use scouring powders or industrial solvents since these agents may damage the paint. Solvent-containing cleaners such as Fantastik are very effective.

If this washing does not remove mildew, mix one cup of household bleach with five gallons of water, along with one cup of a mild liquid soap (e.g., Ivory). Once the door is washed, rinse it thoroughly with clean water. Failure to remove all residues from these cleaning methods may damage the film.

Best practices for repainting steel garage doors

Prepare the surface

Any steel door surface to be repainted must be properly prepared to assure the continued performance of the coating system. The following four problem areas must be addressed before repainting can begin.

1 Dirt and mildew

To prepare your door for repainting, it must first be properly cleaned. If dirt remains after following the cleaning practices above, it may be necessary to wash the door with a diluted solution of Spic and Span (1 cup into 5 gallons of warm water). Always rinse the surface thoroughly to remove any of the agents used in the cleaning procedure. Residual cleaners left on the surface will damage the adhesion of new paint.

2 Surface imperfections

Minor scratches can be lightly sanded or buffed to create a smoother surface. However, do not expose the metal beneath the painted surface. Once this exposed condition exists, the likelihood for rusting is greatly increased. If the metal substrate is exposed, see the following paragraph.

3 Exposed metal and rust

If you have exposed metal, do not destroy the galvanized surface. Use a dull putty knife to remove all loose residue and rust. Before priming the steel door, test the surface for adequate intercoat adhesion (see page 74). Then use a primer specifically

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designed to protect exposed galvanized steel from further corrosion. Allow sufficient time for the primer to dry before applying the topcoat.

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For newly installed doors

If the door was installed in the last two years, its surface may have a layer of factory-applied wax (used to protect the steel panels during fabrication and transit). Failure to remove this material will result in poor adhesion of the new coating. To remove this wax, lightly scuff the surface with a GRAY (not green) 3M synthetic steel wool pad (equivalent to "000" steel wool) saturated with soapy water. Wipe and rinse with clean water only to remove any loose dust or soap film.

Then, perform the Adhesion Test at right. If poor adhesion is still observed, repeat step #4. It is imperative, of course, not to remove the factory finish during this process. If the test results still indicate poor adhesion, *do not proceed*. Contact your garage door supplier to discuss options or alternative coatings.

Apply the paint

After properly preparing the door and confirming intercoat adhesion (see Adhesion Test at right), paint the door within 24 hours, using a high-quality exterior latex house paint. *Do not apply oil-based alkyd house paint over factory-applied finishes.*

Mix the paint thoroughly before using. Mechanical mixing is recommended to assure that no settling remains on the bottom of the container.

The surface must be *completely* dry prior to painting. Avoid painting in the early morning or at temperatures below 50 degrees F (10 degrees C). Apply a uniform coat at the manufacturer's recommended thickness.

ADHESION TEST

How to evaluate intercoat adhesion

Without sufficient intercoat adhesion, the new coat may delaminate after long-term exposure. To ensure proper adhesion, follow these steps.

- 1.) After properly cleaning the surface to be repainted, repaint a 4" x 4" area with the repaint material according to the manufacturer's instructions. Allow to dry completely before proceeding.
- 2.) Use a utility knife to cut a 2" "X" into the repaint coating.
- 3.) Place a 3" strip of Scotch 610 tape over the "X," leaving 1/2" of tape free for removal. Rub the tape 10 times with heavy pressure.
- 4.) Remove the tape by pulling it at a right angle.
- 5.) Examine the tape and the door surface for any signs of paint removal.

If the tape removes more than 1/16" of the repaint material from the "X" cut, the intercoat adhesion is inadequate.

NOTE: It is the sole responsibility of the person doing the repainting to ascertain if acceptable intercoat adhesion is being achieved. ■

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