

PAINTING PLASTERBOARD

This edition of Onboard provides an overview of the requirements for painting plasterboard.



As an interior wall and ceiling lining product, plasterboard is typically used as a substrate for paint finishes.

It should be noted that plasterboard is always manufactured with a small degree of texture, so plasterboard systems usually comprise of textured plasterboard and joints which have been sanded smooth. Therefore the main objective for painting plasterboard is to make two different surfaces look like one uniform continuous surface. The most effective way of achieving this is through the enhancement of surface texture.



Below are general painting requirements which should be followed in order to maximize the life of the plasterboard and achieve a quality finish for the end customer. These requirements can be split into three different groups;

1. *Plasterboard surface preparation*
2. *Choice of an appropriate paint system*
3. *Method of paint application*

1. Plasterboard Surface Preparation

All surfaces must be clean, set and dry prior to painting, including jointing compounds.

If need be, lightly sand any minor surface defects and brush down surfaces to remove dust.

Important information

AS2589: 2007 - *Gypsum Linings Application and Finishing* nominates Level 4 as the default finish unless otherwise specified.

A requirement for both Level 4 and Level 5 finishes is the application of a three coat paint system.

Three coat paint systems applied with a roller are more effective at equalizing plasterboard and joint surfaces through the introduction of texture. It also minimises the occurrence of gloss banding.

Knauf Plasterboard along with other Australian plasterboard manufacturers, Master Painters Australia (MPA) and (AWCI) specify a three coat paint system for plasterboard.

2. Choice of an appropriate paint system

The durability and appearance of the finished paint system are highly dependent on the type of paint system used, its quality, the application method, the colour and the gloss level.



Choice of colour and gloss level

Flat paints reflect light in a way that does not draw attention to small surface variations, but semi gloss and full gloss paints tend to highlight surface imperfections, so high levels of workmanship are required while painting. *But keep in mind that even the finest level of detail may not be enough where lighting is the critical factor.* In areas like kitchens and bathrooms, where glossy paints are used for functional reasons, there must be an expectation and acceptance of a less uniform finish.

Lighter coloured topcoat paints offer a high level of light reflectivity which is good for hiding surface imperfections. Darker topcoats tend to highlight imperfections like full gloss and semi gloss paints. For dark colours or high gloss paints, a Level 5 Finish must be specified according to AS 2589.

Three coat paint system

AS/NZS 2311:2009 - *Painting of Buildings*, nominates requirements for pre paint preparation and painting works. For all new and unpainted plasterboard surfaces, this standard recommends a three coat painting system (one coat of sealer and two coats of finish paint).

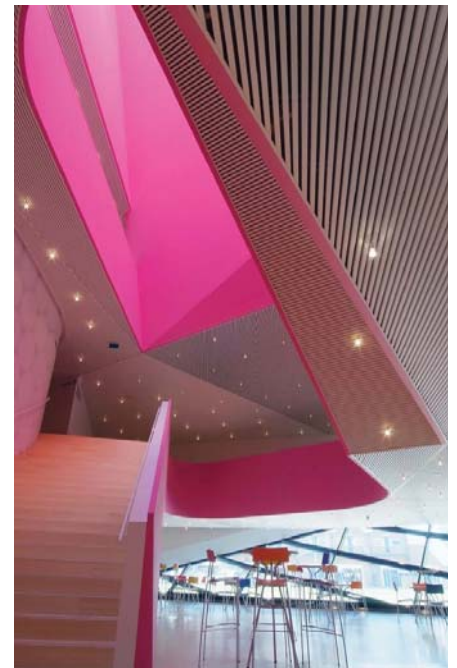
There are cases (such as some commercial projects), where an inferior finish may be all that is required, AS/NZS 2311 therefore allows latitude to the specifier to select paint systems other than those nominated in the standard.

It is a condition of the Knauf 10 Year Warranty that Knauf's installation documentation is followed. This includes the requirement for a quality 3 coat paint system when painting plasterboard.

3. Method of paint application:

There are 3 ways to paint plasterboard;

1. By brush (more appropriate for detailing)
2. By spray (for ease and speed of application)
3. By roller (for the best quality finish)



Universally recommended method of paint application

The preferred method for painting plasterboard is by roller. Although the spray method is widely used in the industry due to ease and speed of paint application, it should be noted that the only way to achieve an acceptable finish is to have all 3 coats (including the sealer) back-rolled while the paint coats are still wet. This will ensure that the roller nap will give the surface enough texture for that overall even and uniform look. These are requirements supported by Knauf Plasterboard and all other Australian plasterboard manufacturers. They are also supported by Master Painters Australia, the Federal Body that represents the interests of all state Master Painters Association and the Association of Wall & Ceiling Industries which is the principal organisation representing the interests of contractors, suppliers and manufacturers in the wall and ceiling industries.



Application of 1st coat

The first coat of paint should be a good quality sealer applied with at least a 10mm nap roller. Advice should be sought from the coatings supplier when in doubt as to which sealer to use. Plasterboard that has been exposed to sunlight and/or is discoloured will require a stain sealer undercoat.

The application of the sealer is essential in order to prepare the plasterboard and jointing compound surfaces for the next two coats of paint by reducing moisture penetration through the surface whilst maintaining a steady suction rate. The sealer should be applied as soon as the plasterboard joints are set and dry as the joints will be susceptible to reabsorbing moisture from the surrounding environment if left unsealed.

The sealer coat should be applied so the plasterboard paper fibres remain flat.

Check for any unsuitable surface imperfections and repair. Lightly sand with fine to medium grade paper before applying the top coats.

Avoid overworking the sealer undercoat on plasterboard joints to avoid compound lifting.

If the sealer undercoat is to be applied via the spray method, then it must be back rolled while the coat is still wet.

Application of 2nd and 3rd coats

The sealer must be allowed to completely dry before the 2nd and 3rd coats of paint are applied. Likewise, adequate drying time must be allowed for the 2nd coat of paint before the 3rd coat is applied.

Cut in edges with a brush and apply paint to the broad areas with an appropriate nap roller (at least 10mm). The roller nap gives the texture that improves the overall evenness of finish.

With spray paint, the paint must not be diluted to more than the paint manufacturer's recommendation. Both the 2nd and the 3rd coat must be back-rolled while the paint is still wet to avoid compromising the quality of the finished surface. Any minor paint touch-ups can then be done with a roller rather than having to re-spray.

It should be noted that painting work should be carried out with adequate ventilation during and after application. Painting carried out in enclosed areas, or on a cold or a wet day will require prolonged drying times.

Care should also be taken in ensuring that the joints are dry before the 2nd and 3rd coats are applied.

Builder responsibilities

Ensure that ceilings and walls which have already been completed by the plasterer do not get damaged by other trades and services until painting takes place.

If a Finish Level has been specified for the project, it is up to the builder to ensure that this is communicated to both plasterer and painter.

Likewise, if a painting system has been specified for the project it is up to the builder to ensure this specification is communicated to the painter.

The use of a good quality three coat paint system can also minimise occurrence of gloss banding, although there are various other parameters which can contribute to its occurrence. As per information* supplied by the Australian Paint Manufacturers Federation, if a three coat system is not selected, plasterers plasterboard and paint manufacturers cannot rule out the possible occurrence of gloss banding, and therefore cannot be held responsible for rectification costs.

If a decision is made to override one or multiple requirements necessary to achieve a particular level of finish then an inferior finish should be expected.

*Refer to Information Factsheet titled "Sheen Staining of Plasterboard - 3 Coat System" provided by APMF on <http://www.apmf.asn.au/documents/sheenstaining.html>

Plasterer responsibilities

Plasterboard must be installed in accordance with the plasterboard manufacturer's recommendations.

If a Level of Finish has been specified, then the plasterer should follow the requirements necessary to achieve that Finish Level.

Where no Level of Finish has been specified AS/NZS 2589 nominates a Level 4 Finish as the default and plasterers should follow all Level 4 Finish requirements or be advised by the builder on what level of finish will be required.

If a decision is made to override one or multiple requirements necessary to achieve the nominated level of finish then there must be mutual agreement between the plasterer and builder that an inferior finish is expected.

Painter responsibilities

The painter should follow all requirements necessary to attain the required Level of Finish.

Paint must be applied in accordance with paint manufacturer's recommendations.

When painting plasterboard, the roller method is preferred as it produces the best results. Where the spray method is used, painters must always back roll all paint coats while the paint is still wet or risk an inferior finish. The paint industry refers to this process as 'wet on wet' whereby the roller is dipped into a paint tray and rolled immediately after the spray process to ensure that paint is not actually removed from the surface by a dry roller while actually adding texture to the overall finish

Where a Finish Level 4 or 5 is nominated, the painter must use a 3 coat paint system applied with a roller or back rolled if sprayed. Failure to do so will result in an inferior level of finish being attained.

Other sources of information

AS2589: 2007 - *Gypsum Linings Application and Finishing*

AS/NZS 2311:2009 - *Painting of Buildings*

awci.org.au

masterpainters.org.au

apmf.asn.au

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For further information on Knauf products or systems, contact

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or visit our website at

knaufplasterboard.com.au

