



Painting and Decorating Contractors of America

PDCA INDUSTRY STANDARDS

PDCA P3-04

Designation of Paint Color

1. Scope

- 1.1. The purpose of this standard is to establish the number and placement of paint colors and color ranges prior to bidding.
- 1.2. The intent of this document is to establish criteria for bidding purposes when the number, extent and placement of paint colors and color ranges are not designated in the bid documents.
- 1.3. It is not the intent of this document to limit the number and placement of colors on a particular project.
- 1.4. This document describes and defines special finishes.

2. Significance and Use

- 2.1. The number and placement of paint colors and color ranges affect the Painting and Decorating Contractor's costs in the performance of a project and, therefore, the painting contractor's bid. As the number and placement of paint colors increase, labor productivity decreases. As paint colors deepen, painting material costs increase.
- 2.2. The number and placement of paint colors and color ranges must be indicated in the project bid documents.
- 2.3. When the number and placement of paint colors and color ranges are not designated in the bid documents, the Painting and Decorating Contractor must have:
 - 2.3.1. A frame of reference upon which to base the bid.

3. Reference Documents and Standards

- 3.1. AIA Document A 201- General Conditions of the Contract for Construction, 1997.
- 3.2. AIA Document A 401- Standard Form of Agreement Between Contractor and Subcontractor, 1997.

- 3.3. ASTM, 313, Whiteness Index.
- 3.4. ASTM, E 12, Standard on Color and Appearance.
- 3.5. MPI, The Master Painters Glossary- Painting and Decorating Terminology, 1997& 2004.
- 3.6. PDCA, Standard P1-04, Touch- Up Painting and Damage Repair- Financial Responsibility.
- 3.7. PDCA, Standard P9-04, Definition of Trade Terms.
- 3.8. PDCA, Painting and Decorating Craftsman's Manual and Textbook, 1995, 8th edition.
- 3.9. Painting and Decorating Encyclopedia, William Brushwell, Published by Goodheart-Wilcox.
- 3.10. FSCT, Coating Encyclopedic Dictionary, Edited by Stanley LeSota, 1995.
- 3.11. Webster's New World Collegiate Dictionary, 4th Edition, 2002.
- 3.12. If there is a conflict between any of the references and this standard, the requirements of this standard shall prevail.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **COLOR:** One aspect of appearance; a stimulus based on visual response to light, and consisting of three dimensions of Hue, Saturation and Lightness. [FSCT]
- 4.2. **COLOR RANGE:** The extent of colors. This includes tints, tones and shades of basic hues and mixtures, thereof. Paint manufacturers' systems of color tint bases used in conjunction with colorants to produce a wide range of colors, including pastel, mid-tone, deep-tone, ultra-deep tone and variations thereof. [Craftsman's]
- 4.3. **COLORANT:** Any substance that imparts color to another material or mixture. Colorants can



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be either dyes or pigments. [Craftsman's]

4.4. **CONTRACTING ENTITY:** The general contractor, owner of the property, construction manager, developer or other entity legally responsible for the agreement or authorized agent of any of the above. [PDCA, P9-04]

4.5. **DECORATIVE (PAINT) FINISHES:** Application of paints or glazes to adorn, decorate or embellish a surface as compared to a plain solid color, stain or varnish finish and as opposed to performing a protective function. This general group of decorative paint finishes includes a number of "subgroups," some of which overlap and others of which have more than one name by which they are identified. These include:

- **Faux (false) Finishes:** In French, "false" finish. These seek to imitate products found in nature such as wood, marble, granite, stone, etc. These include wood graining, marbling, gilding, etc.
- **Representative Finishes:** These seek to imitate products otherwise made like leather, parchment, frescoe, Venetian plaster (itself a faux plaster), etc.
- **Special Effect Finishes:** Broken color effects (as opposed to imitation effects), such as ragging on, ragging off, sponging on, sponging off, strie', splattering, stippling, etc.
- **Graphic Finishes:** Detailed effects such as stenciling and graphics that are in accordance with "mathematical rules."
- **Pictorial Finishes:** Decorative effects such as murals, scenics, portraits, etc.
- **Trompe d'oeil:** In French, "trick of the eye." That which creates such a strong illusion that it is difficult to ascertain whether it is real or a representation. Usually, but not always, three-dimensional, giving the impression of depth and perspective. [MPI]

4.6. **DECORATIVE PAINTING:** Painting done primarily for appearance rather than protection. [PDCA, P9-04]

4.7. **DEEP (COLOR):** Intense, strong color with no appearance of black. [Craftsman's] (Also called an accent color.)

4.8. **DEEP-TONE BASE:** Paint base used to develop

deep colors. Might contain small amount of white. [Craftsman's] (Also called an accent base.)

4.9. **FAUX FINISHES:** In French, literally a "false" finish. A decorative finish applied to surfaces (wood, drywall, glass, etc.) to make them appear as different substrates. The general category may also include Faux Plaster (such as Venetian Plaster, etc.) or Faux Brick finishes (which may use actual plaster formulations or brick facing) but which also can be simulated with decorative painted effects.

Originally, it meant an artificial finish that represented or imitated a finish of natural products such as wood, stone, marble, etc. for those who could not obtain the "real thing." It is also used today to match "real" adjacent items where cost or regulation would preclude the use of the "real" material. Faux Marbre ("false marble") is Marbling, Faux Bois ("false wood") is Wood Graining. There is also Faux Granite ("false granite") and Faux Tortoiseshell ("false tortoiseshell").

The term, however, has come to include imitations of other products that are not directly "from nature." Faux Leather, Faux Parchment, and Faux Moldings are some that are now included, as is Gilding, Antiquing, Frescoe and some Verdigris/Patina.

Faux Finish does not properly include Special Effect Finishes, Graphic Finishes, Pictorial Finishes and Tromp d'oeil. These are defined elsewhere. Fantasy Finishes may include "creative" faux finishes, or just may create different effects. [MPI]

4.10. **GRAPHICS:** Two or more colors decoratively applied to a surface in a clearly defined pattern. [MPI]

4.11. **MID-TONE BASE:** Paint base used to develop colors darker than a pastel. Tint strength of white has been reduced. [Craftsman's] (Lighter than deep-tone base.)

4.12. **MULTI-COLOR FINISH:** A speckled coating containing flecks of small individual colored particles different from the base color. Syn. Speckled Finish. [FSCT]



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- 4.13. **MURAL:** 1) A painting applied directly to a wall or ceiling. 2) A wallcovering with a mural scene that continues over several strips to cover one wall without a repeat. Also called a scenic. [Craftsman's]
- 4.14. **OFF-WHITE:** Any number of light colors that are nearly white, but contain minute amounts of color or toner. Off-white colors are used as base colors in interior paints for large surfaces such as walls. [MPI] (Lighter than a pastel.)
- 4.15. **PAINTING AND DECORATING CONTRACTOR:** The individual or company contracted to apply paints, coatings, wallcoverings and other decorative finishes. [PDCA, P9-04]
- 4.16. **PASTEL:** A soft, pale shade of any color. [Webster's] (Lighter than a mid-tone base.)
- 4.17. **SPECIAL FINISHES:** Paints and coatings requiring special tools or techniques for application, *e.g.*, Faux Finishes, Decorative Finishes, Graphics, Multi-Color or Murals. [MPI] A representative sample must be submitted by the Contracting Entity prior to bid on projects where these finishes are specified.
- 4.18. **ULTRA-DEEP BASE:** Paint base used to develop deep intense colors with no apparent white. [Craftsman's] (Deeper than a mid-tone base.)
- 4.19. **WHITE:** A basic paint color as described by coatings manufacturers. ASTM D1535-89 "specifying color by the Munsell System," 3.2.5 Munsell Value, N-10- Ideal White. ASTM E313-87, indexes of whiteness.

5. Standard Specification

- 5.1. The Number and Placement of Interior Paint Colors.
- 5.1.1. Color Level I: One paint color shall be selected for all interior painted surfaces of the entire project.

- 5.1.2. Color Level II: No more than two interior paint colors shall be selected for the entire project. Only one paint color will be selected for the interior painted surfaces of any one room or area. The exact placement of the colors will be clearly specified in the bid documents.
- 5.1.3. Color Level III: More than one paint color shall be selected for the interior painted surface of any one room or area. No more than one paint color will be selected for any particular surface. The exact placement of the colors will be clearly specified in the bid documents.
- 5.1.4. Color Level IV: The selection of unlimited paint colors for interior painted surfaces. The placement of colors and the type and placement of special finishes will be clearly specified in the bidding documents. Special Finishes are described in 4.17.

5.2. The Number and Placement of Exterior Paint Colors.

- 5.2.1. Color Level I: One paint color shall be selected for all exterior painted surfaces of any structure or building.
- 5.2.2. Color Level II: No more than two exterior paint colors shall be selected for any structure or building. No more than one paint color will be selected for any particular surface. The exact placement of the colors will be clearly specified in the bid documents.
- 5.2.3. Color Level III: Three or more paint colors shall be selected for any structure or building. No more than one paint color will be selected for any particular surface. The exact placement of colors will be clearly specified in the bid documents.
- 5.2.4. Color Level IV: The selection of unlimited paint colors for any structure or building. The placement of colors and the type and placement of special finishes will be clearly specified in the bidding documents. Special Finishes are defined in 4.17.



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5.3. Color Ranges

- 5.3.1. Interior color levels I, II and III will only permit the use of paint colors normally designated as off-whites or pastels.
- 5.3.2. Exterior color levels I, II and III will only permit the use of paint colors normally designated as off-whites, pastels or mid-tones.
- 5.3.3. The use of white, mid-tone, deep-tone and ultra deep-tone paint colors for interior use and white, deep-tone and ultra deep-tone paint colors for exterior use are limited to Color Level IV only. The exact placement of these color ranges will be specified in the bid documents.

5.4. Special Finishes

- 5.4.1. The use of special finishes including, but not limited to, graphics, murals, faux finishes and multi-colored coatings is designated Color Level IV. The exact placement of special finishes will be specified in the bid documents.

5.5. Paint Coverage

- 5.5.1. Color selection must be consistent with the paint specifications for the project, structure or building. The paint specified must be available in the color range selected.
- 5.5.2. The colors selected in the materials specified must be capable of achieving full and uniform coverage when the number of coats specified has been applied, as described in PDCA Standard P1-04, Touch- Up Painting and Damage Repair- Financial Responsibility, 2.4, a properly painted surface, and in accordance with the manufacturer's printed instructions, recommendations or application procedures.

5.6. Special Circumstances

- 5.6.1. In the event the number and placement of paint colors and color ranges increase from this standard, or if special finishes are added, then the Painting and Decorating Contractor shall be entitled to additional compensation.

5.6.2. In the event that the number and placement of paint colors and colors ranges are not designated in the bid documents, then the Painting and Decorating Contractor will assume that Color Level I will be selected for both interior and exterior use.

5.6.3. In the event that the paint colors selected do not achieve full and uniform coverage with the specified number of coats at the spread rate and application method recommended by the manufacturer and an additional coat or coats are necessary, the Painting and Decorating Contractor shall be entitled to additional compensation.

5.6.4. In the event the same color of a different paint material or sheen level is to be used on the same surface or substrate, the exact placement of different paint material or gloss level shall be specified in the bid documents.

6. Comments

- 6.1. This standard establishes a system for the designation of interior and exterior paint colors and color ranges prior to bidding.
- 6.2. This standard establishes a guide for the preparation of a paint bid when paint colors and color ranges are not specified in the bidding documents.
- 6.3. This standard clarifies areas of responsibility. Improved communication reduces misunderstandings.
- 6.4. This standard is a nationally recognized consensus document for the Painting and Decorating industry's work practices.

7. Disclaimer of Liability

PDCA does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any of the information contained herein.