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Cutting in and Avoiding 'Picture Framing'

What is Picture Framing?

"Picture Framing" is a common problem encountered by painters and is caused by a number of different factors. One of the most common types of picture framing is visible when the "cut in" strips on the borders of a painted area become visible upon drying. The problem becomes particularly more visible on textured finishes and extreme cases have occurred on relatively highly textured surfaces such as ROCKCOTE Sandcote.

What Causes Picture Framing?

The visual effects of Picture Framing are normally due to an excessive or uneven build up of paint. This can be due to the cut in area drying before being worked in and subsequently an excessive total film build in the border area.

When dry, the thicker film appears glossier than the main wall area. With glancing incident light and viewed at a wide angle the problem can appear much worse than if it is viewed head on. When a cut in area is done with a heavily loaded brush rather than a small roller the paint may lay on top of the texture rather than getting down between the sand and providing an even coating.

Another cause of picture framing is due to incompatibility of colourants with the paint material. Under different levels of application forces between rolling and brushing the final colour may appear different. This problem is also exacerbated by painting when the air or wall temperature is too hot and rapid drying occurs. Not using a primer where it is necessary to use a primer may also aggravate the problem and contribute to overly rapid drying because water and polymer is over absorbed from the paint coating by the substrate.

Another type of picture framing is mostly experienced by spray painters when applying a highly fluid paint film on a horizontal flat surface. If the coating is applied too heavily, rather than run or sag as on a vertical wall, the paint tends to collect more heavily around the borders of the surface thus giving a picture frame appearance. For heavier high-build epoxy finishes, this form of picture framing can even occur on a vertical surface.

Tips on Avoiding Picture Framing When Painting Textured Coatings

- When painting textures with a roller it is important to use a mini roller, 8cm wide or less rather than a brush. Use a brush only as a touch up measure for difficult sections where a small roller cannot be used.
- Apply paint sparingly on the cut in border area. Use a short nap 10mm pile roller. There is no need to go to a larger roller.
- Do not to paint in hot weather (above 35°C) and never paint in direct sunlight.
- Minimize the width of the cut in border areas where possible.
- Plan the job and keep a wet edge throughout the application. Work in a team of two or more and minimise the time between cutting in a border and working in with the main wall area so that the cut in area is not allowed to dry. Consulting the weather forecast can be helpful in planning ahead.