

Information Data Sheet

Yellowing Enamels

PROLONG THE LIFE OF LIGHT-COLOURED ENAMELS

Advice from the Australian Paint Manufacturers Federation.

Applying white or light-coloured enamel or alkyd paints in the presence of water-based paint, which is being applied at the same time, can adversely affect the colour of the alkyd paint.

Yellowing, which occurs naturally with age, can also be accelerated using some household cleaners.

Enamel paints are based on vegetable oils and provide a very tough, hard wearing coating for interior surfaces.

This toughness is achieved through the vegetable oil component reacting with oxygen in the air and drying or hardening. As a result of this drying process white or pale coloured enamel paints have always tended to yellow with ageing, particularly in situations where there is poor lighting, eg: sliding cavity doors or inside or behind cupboards.

The Australian Paint Manufacturers Federation recommends that if a white or pale colour enamel is being used, the painter should avoid painting at times of high humidity or at very low temperatures (which adversely affect drying) and, for a period of two weeks after application of the alkyd enamel, should:

- Ensure maximum ventilation
- Avoid applying water-based paint in the vicinity of the new enamel work
- Avoid using household cleaners containing high levels of ammonia

The ammonia content can usually be easily ascertained from the label on the cleaner.

Some recently developed water based acrylic finishes have a different drying mechanism to enamels and are not subject to the yellowing phenomenon.