4 Tips for a Flawless Finish when Painting New Drywall

Drywall is the most common interior wall surfacing material used in modern construction. Despite its prevalence in the construction industry, achieving an even and uniform finish when painting new drywall can be difficult.

This is due to a difference in texture and porosity between the paper surface and the joint filling compound used. Additionally, repairs made after painting work has commenced will create an uneven surface that results in an irregular and patchy appearance after being painted.

Achieving a smooth, uniform finish like this can be a challenge when painting new drywall.

Although these defects and flaws can look like application errors, the reality is that these defects have nothing to do with the quality of paint or application methods used. The following list provides best practices for achieving a flawless finish when painting new drywall.

1) Ensure proper lighting is in place and that the interior temperature is above 60°F before painting work commences.

For new construction projects, painting work can often begin before the lighting and heat systems have been installed. Proper lighting will make defects in the drywall more noticeable, and a change in temperature can cause movement in the walls and seams of the drywall, creating new defects. All these surface defects will need to be repaired and sealed, so it is far more efficient to have these repairs made before painting commences.

2) Use a high quality latex primer sealer

Using a high quality latex primer sealer when painting new drywall provides a continuously sealed surface with relatively uniform porosity. In general, primers and topcoats with higher volume solids will do a better job of filling in small surface irregularities as they leave a higher build on the substrate.

3) Be prepared to make drywall repairs after the prime-coat.

Although using a high quality latex primer sealer is an important first step, many defects in the drywall are practically invisible until the prime-coat has been applied. This means the drywall contractor will have to return to the jobsite to make repairs. These repaired areas will need to be sealed again.

Excessive drywall repairs made after application of intermediate coat

4) Never make significant drywall repairs after the intermediate coat has been applied.

The variance in surface texture created by applying uneven layers of filler, sealer and intermediate coat across an entire wall is what causes the inconsistent appearance of the finish. Depending on when drywall repairs are made, a single wall could consist of drywall, sealer and intermediate coat in one area, and drywall, sealer, filler, sealer, intermediate coat directly beside it. For this reason it is advisable to make as many drywall repairs as possible before painting work commences.

Professional Tip

Many materials, if not removed from the concrete surface, will affect the life of the coating. These include form release agents, surface hardeners, laitance, efflorescence, grease, soil, fungus, mold, and mildew, which make it impossible to obtain proper adhesion.