Choosing the Correct Specification Systems

Whether you're working on a new building or a repainting job, specifications can make or break a project. When *specifications are clear, detailed, and relevant, everyone from contractors to property owners will be on the same page. It also keeps budget and performance aligned and helps prevent costly mistakes and miscalculations.*

Whether the specifications are written by architects, specifiers, or inspectors, getting the specifications right the first time can keep a project on time and on budget. Here are the steps to make sure you choose the right specification systems, and a new MPI tool that makes the job easier.

Choosing an Architectural System *There are specific steps to consider when writing specifications for new construction and architectural coatings:*

- *Determine if the project is interior or exterior, this influences resistance requirements.*
- *Identify the substrate, this is essential for determining compatibilities and performance levels.*
- *Note the type and level of surface preparation needed to ensure adhesion.*
- *Decide upon finish type, depending on the desired aesthetics and durability required.*
- *Evaluate environmental conditions of the surrounding area and whether special products or application methods are needed.*
- *Choose a gloss level that will meet the desired visual and maintenance outcomes.*
- *Consider available performance levels and green requirements.*
- *Choose appropriate products from the [Approved Product List (APL)](.)*

Choosing a Repaint System There are a couple of extra steps with a repaint system because you'll be working with *existing coatings:*

- *Look for any defects in the surface and evaluate possible causes and remediation.*
- *Determine the degree of surface degradation (DSD level).*
- *Review the MPI Repainting Surface Preparation (MPI RSP) standards required.*

To make specifications easier, the [MPI Decision Tree](.) tool easily walks you through the process. Once you've input the project details and made your choices, you'll instantly receive a list of chosen systems and their MPI APL numbers, so you can easily locate what you need.

For repaint or restoration projects, the Decision Tree will also guide you through DSD levels and severity and their corresponding MPI Repainting Surface Preparation Standards.

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Professional Tip

The MPI APL is the industry standard for finding the right product to fit the job. Use the "Product Sort by Type" button at the [top of the website](#) to quickly browse interior and exterior products, including water-based, solvent-based, primers, and topcoats. It's an easy way to find products when the APL number isn't known.