

# APPLICATION TIPS FOR APPLYING CLEAR COAT PRODUCTS

- Before applying any clear coat product, make sure your surface is clean and free of dust and other surface debris.
- Test the different sheens of your clear coat products. The glossier the sheen, the more obvious any surface flaws will be because of the increased light reflectivity. Conversely, if you are working on a textured surface, the sheen will not be as reflective due to light being “absorbed” by the texture.
- The normal sheen of a clear coat product is gloss. Flattening agents are added in to make it satin or matt. This means these products will have more solid particles in them and, therefore, should be stirred thoroughly before and during use. For containers that do not allow space for a stir stick, gently roll the container in your hands to mix or empty the contents into a bucket and stir gently. Avoid shaking the container. Shaking can cause the formation of tiny bubbles that can dry into the final finish.
- Additional solid particles present in all sheens other than gloss are generally the reason for a milky appearance (called “blushing” or “frosting”) when satin and matt clear coats are applied too thickly over dark colors. This is especially true where a “double thickness” of the product is applied, such as in areas that are cut in with a brush and then overlapped with a roller.
- An excellent industry trick when applying multiple coats of a clear coat product is to start with gloss for your first layer and then “work down” to your desired sheen using satin or matt for the final layers. This will result in a much clearer finish.
- Temperature is important to the success of any clear coat finish. If the room temperature or surface temperature is too cool (55°F or 13°C and below), you might end up with “fish eyes” or pinholes in your finish. Cooler temperatures may also cause problems with how the finish hardens or levels out. On the other hand, if the temperatures are too hot (85°F or 30°C and above), the finish may dry too fast, which could prevent it from leveling out because the water content evaporates too quickly.
- Humidity is also a factor. If the humidity is too high, the finish may not dry properly and trapped moisture could cause a cloudy appearance. In general, it is not a good idea to rush drying a clear coat using a hair dryer as this could cause a skin to form, trapping the moisture and not allowing it to evaporate. It’s also wise to avoid fans or air conditioning and/or heat vents blowing directly on a freshly-applied clear coat.
- Always thin your water-based clear coat products with a small amount of water (about 10%) for easier application and good flow out. However, if you thin your product too much, you may experience fish eyes or pinholes in the finish. Always test on a sample first.

- To reduce brush or lap marks when applying a clear coat product, use a quality varnish brush. Apply thin coats and do not over brush as the product is setting. Trying to touch up or smooth an area that has already begun to dry could cause “flashing” (uneven sheen levels that read as spots or streaks). Working with speed and confidence is key, as well as applying two coats to help eliminate skips and even out the finish.
- Before wet sanding and polishing any clear coat finish, it is recommended to let the finish dry a minimum of 72 hours.
- Be patient. Allow each step to dry properly. There are too many heart-breaking stories of beautifully executed finishes being ruined by the improper or rushed application of a clear coat product.
- All water-based clear coat products have a cure time of approximately 30 days.
- It is highly recommended that you spend time experimenting with different clear coat products to get a feel for how they spray, brush, roll, sand and polish. One cannot be considered an expert without hands-on experience working with them.
- Remember that no clear coat will be a “coat of steel.” These finishes deserve respect.



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