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Technical Bulletin

Field-Painting of Mullion Mate® Extruded Aluminum Partition Gap Closure

The following procedure will outline the steps necessary to successfully field-paint Mullion Mate® Extruded Aluminum Partition Gap Closure by Gordon, Inc. Follow all installation instructions that are applicable to your application.

The first determination that will need to be made when preparing for field painting is how the paint will be applied. Spray painting typically yields the best consistency and results but requires masking the surrounding areas to protect them from overspray. If other areas of the space are going to be painted the same color as well, then masking on vertical surfaces is limited to mullion and glass. Manual applications with brushes, rollers, or pads are also an acceptable alternative if spraying is not practical.

Once the application technique is determined, then the paint needs to be selected. In most cases, a latex based paint or an oil-based enamel paint would be acceptable for this application, especially if surrounding wall areas are being coated at the same time. If your application has extraordinary requirements, then you should discuss those requirements with a reputable paint supplier.

In the absence of an application procedure provided by the paint manufacturer, the steps listed below are a good guide for successfully applying paint to your Mullion Mate® Extruded Aluminum Partition Gap Closure in the field. Gordon, Inc. also offers a paint-ready option (PDR00000) which will eliminate the need to sand the parts prior to painting. If this option is used skip steps 2-4.

1. The first step in preparing the surface to be coated is to clean the surface of all soils including dirt, dust, oil, or any foreign substance that may impair adhesion of the newly applied paint. This can be done with a white microfiber towel and an acceptable cleaning solvent such as denatured alcohol or equivalent. Always follow safety instructions when using solvents for cleaning as they are typically dangerous to inhale and are generally flammable.
2. Once the part is cleaned, then the surface can be abraded for promoting mechanical adhesion. This is most effectively accomplished with sandpaper either by means of a power sander or by hand. For spray applications of liquid paint, sanding should be performed with 400 grit paper. The scratches produced from sanding can easily be filled in by the paint. It is important to concentrate this effort primarily on the areas that will be seen after installation. It is also recommended to dry wipe the metal being sanded periodically during the sanding step. This will help remove any debris that could cause deep scratches to form during sanding.
3. Inspect the sanding job thoroughly. Any areas that do not look well sanded can be fixed at this time. Remember, this step is directly responsible for how well the paint will adhere to the parts.
4. After the parts have been satisfactorily sanded, they should be wiped down again with denatured alcohol to remove sanding residue. This should be repeated until the wiping cloth stops removing residue.
5. Following the paint manufacturer's handling instructions, go ahead and prepare the paint for application. For one-component systems (i.e., Latex or oil-based enamels) this will typically only involve stirring the paint to ensure homogeneity. For two-component paints (i.e., epoxies or polyurethanes) follow mixing and combining instructions closely so that the paint will cure properly.

6. Make sure that all safety precautions are followed. Most paints contain aromatic solvents which are not healthy to breathe as well as possibly being flammable. Always use appropriate PPE when painting, especially indoors where ventilation is limited.
7. It is generally best practice to paint something using a series of light coats with appropriate tacking-time in between coats. The manufacturer's instructions should address this adequately.
8. Allow ample dry time after the last coat is applied for best results. For most paints, this process usually takes about 24-72 hours to achieve full cure. This is when the properties of the paint are fully realized.

After the paint has dried fully, inspect the parts, and confirm that the quality meets expectation. Should there be any defect in the parts, they can be sanded and repainted using the same steps from above. Small chips or defects can be touched up using a small artist paint brush by hand. Once the painting process is completed, caulk all necessary seams with either an over-the-counter latex or silicone caulk.

If you have any questions about field-painting components from Gordon, Inc. please call your sales representative. One of our technical representatives can be deployed to help you with your painting questions.