

Laminating Over Plastic Laminate

Q. *Is laminating over existing plastic laminate an acceptable practice? If so, what is the best procedure?*

A. *Jeff Pitcher responds:* It is possible to add a second layer of laminate, though it's always best if you can remove the existing laminate and get down to a clean substrate. Unfortunately, there's really no good way to get old laminate off unless it's loose to begin with. If so, by using a torch and a putty knife, you may be able to remove what's there. Don't ever apply a second layer over loose laminate.

If the first layer is well adhered, scuff the surface with a belt sander and an 80- or 100-grit belt. The key is to break the slick surface, since most glues will not stick well to slick, nonporous surfaces. After scuffing the surface, wipe it with a solvent like mineral spirits or paint thinner. This helps the glue to "wet out" — meaning that the glue will spread well instead of beading up on the surface. After wiping the counter clean and dry, apply the laminate as you usually would.

Jeff Pitcher is marketing director for Custom-Pak Adhesives in Newark, Ohio.

Q. *I build deck railings, awning frames, and other structures out of welded, galvanized steel tubing. I can't get paint to stick for very long. So far I have only tried Rustoleum after using a mild acid rinse. It lasted about two years before the paint started to peel. Is there a product or technique that will last longer?*

A. *James Benney responds:* Yes! Following proper preparation and

application of the right product under the right conditions, the paint should never peel, but should provide many years of service before it simply wears away or oxidizes enough to warrant redoing.

We wipe down all new galvanized metal with a rag or sponge saturated with pure white vinegar (that's your acid rinse), then we rinse thoroughly with clear, clean water and let it dry. This is to remove slick manufacturing residues that will prevent your paint product from adhering to the metal. You have to treat all surfaces, because you will have problems with any areas you miss.

Under warm, dry conditions (this is important!), there are many paint products that can now be applied directly to the metal, including most high-end latex paints. Often on gutters and downspouts, we will use our latex or oil trim color as a first and second coat. On railings and awning frames we recommend Benjamin Moore's IronClad Retardo as both a primer and finish paint because of its unusual durability and its soft, low-luster finish. Whether brushing or spraying, make sure you cover it with a nice full coat on each application. You might be surprised how long it lasts.



James Benney, of Paintcraft Associates, is a painting contractor in Orinda, Calif.

GOT A QUESTION? Send it to On the House, JLC, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477; or e-mail to jlc@bginet.com.

