

FACTSHEET: WHEN TO USE A PRIMER

A primer creates a stable surface for paint to adhere to.

While some higher quality paints such as Fenwick & Tilbrook are self-priming, it is often advisable to also use a separate primer first.

This is particularly worthwhile if you are unsure what was previously painted onto the surface you are about to paint, or if the surface is unstable in some way.

Fenwick & Tilbrook Multi-surface Primer can help to achieve greater coverage with the top-coat of paint, meaning you need to use less paint to achieve the perfect colour-rich result.

Primers also help extend longevity of your paintwork and a good primer will enable you to paint virtually anything.

The most common reason for needing a primer is when the surface being painted has been previously painted with an **oil-based paint**. When painting water-based paint on to a surface that has been previously painted in an oil-based paint, you must key the surface and use a primer to keep the two products apart – oil and water do not mix.

This preparation will allow the new paint to adhere to the old pre-painted surface.

A primer is always needed to paint shiny surfaces such as:

- Metal
- Plastic (such as [U-PVC](#) windows)
- Ceramic tiles

Without correct preparation and the use of a suitable primer, the paint will not adhere to the glossy surface, and will just peel off.

When painting on to porous surfaces such as new plaster, MDF or plasterboard, you will always need to prime first. See our Fact Sheets on painting [new plaster](#) and [MDF](#) for more detailed instructions.

If you are restoring an object and have stripped the paint off it, a primer is a good base for new paint.

Disclaimer This information is given in good faith but without warranty since skill of paint application and site conditions are outside of our control. We reserve the right to withdraw or amend colours and finishes at any time. All our paints are made fresh to order so are not returnable.

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