

Tech Note #1: Plated Finish Information

When you choose your decorative window or door hardware you look for the best in appearance and durability. AmesburyTruth is known for providing high quality products. As with any product there are limitations to how well it will function or last in varied environments, decorative (plated) finishes are no exception.

There are many conditions that make up the environment we live in and affect the life of a plated finish. These different conditions can be made up of areas with high levels of automotive and industrial pollutants, ultra-violet rays, and coastal areas. It is highly possible that one will experience accelerated levels of tarnishing in these areas with the salty sea air of coastal applications being the most severe. A coastal area is any residential or commercial building within 4 miles of the coast or where ocean tidal flows can occur. These areas are subject to a high level of salinity through tidal and windy conditions, Decorative Finishes are not recommended for these areas. Painted finishes or PVD finishes (when available) are recommended for these areas, however please note that all finishes will likely show some type of degradation in these environments over time. Please refer to AmesburyTruth's Tech Note #7-Corrosion, for additional information about the effects of environmental conditions on window and door hardware and what options there are for you.

AmesburyTruth offers a wide variety of plated finishes on our entire product line. Some of these finishes have the look of highly polished brass, some have an antique look, and others have a distressed finish to look as though they have been around for many years.

There are some exceptions to what product can accept certain finishes. Plastic parts cannot be used with the Distressed Finishes as the substrate will not hold up to the distressing process. The application of a Distressed Finish does not work well on highly intricate parts or parts with very sharp edges as the process will not "age" these areas the same as other areas on the part surface. Polished Finishes may have a slight "textured" appearance in areas with deep recesses, narrow lines, or on the back of some parts where it is difficult to access the area during the polishing process.

Definition of a “Living” Finish:

When choosing a decorative finish for your home, AmesburyTruth provides many options. One of those options is our Oil Rubbed Bronze (.51). This option is what AT classifies as a “living finish”. Any product that is listed as having a “living finish” has a coating on the top surface that can be removed by contact during use. Living finishes will show age based on the amount of contact they have during normal handling and operation. Living finishes are designed so the top coating will give an aged appearance as it wears away and exposes the copper or brass substrate. Currently AT’s Oil Rubbed Bronze (.51) is our only finish designed to ‘age” this way.

The process used to apply the living finish is a multi-step process. The first is a coating over the parts base material (plastic or zinc). This undercoating can be copper or brass. The undercoating is a wear resistant layer that will not “rub” off, however will oxidize in corrosive environments. The next layer is the “living finish” that is made to adhere to the undercoating and is removed with contact (rubbed or constant contact). The living finish located on the outside of the product (the part that is observed by the person looking at the window or door) has been lightly wiped down and maybe inconsistent and have an oily residue. These inconsistencies are inherent as the plating technician does not want to remove too much of the living finish as they clean off the excess plating material. The underside of the product will not have been wiped down and may have more plating residue on it. This area will give you the greatest chance for the “blackening” of your fingers as you touch it.

While handling or installing the hardware it is possible that one might get some of the excess plating material on their hands. You will see some “wipe off” of the plating as the product is used and that is part of the “aging” process that is expected from a “living” finish. The finish will continue to transform as it ages and is contacted through normal use. Once again, it is not recommended for this finish to be used in corrosive or coastal environments.

If you have any question on what finishes are possible on the product you would like to purchase from AmesburyTruth, please contact your Sales Representative and they will provide you with the information you need.

