

SOLVENTS USED WITH PAINTS AND COATINGS

Solvents differ in what they can dissolve, odor, and flammability. It is important that the correct solvent be used to thin or clean up a coating.

➔ **All solvents must be used with proper safety precautions**

1. Mineral Spirits: A Mixture of Aliphatic Hydrocarbons; Similar to Lighter Fluid and Charcoal Lighter

- used for most oil-based and alkyd paints, primers and varnishes
- “Paint Thinner” may be mostly, or all, mineral spirits
- add to paint only when necessary; use to clean brushes, spills, etc.
- not effective for cleaning up dried paint on brushes, etc.

2. Odorless Mineral Spirits: Mineral Spirits Processed to have Minimal Levels of Aromatic and Sulfur-containing Compounds

- a reduced odor version of mineral spirits; used in the same way
- same ventilation and other safety requirements as with mineral spirits
- may be more expensive than regular mineral spirits

3. VM&P Naphtha (Varnish Maker’s and Painter’s Naphtha)

- similar to mineral spirits; used by professional painters as paint thinner
- somewhat faster drying than mineral spirits

4. Lacquer Thinner: Blend of Different Solvent Types

- used specifically for pigmented & clear lacquers, some wood fillers, etc., that specify use of *lacquer thinner*
- is extremely flammable; can soften plastics and paints

5. Alcohol: Denatured Ethyl Alcohol Is The Type Used

- “denatured” means the alcohol has been treated to make it undrinkable
- used with shellac and shellac-based primers (“pigmented shellac”)
- do not substitute isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) or methanol (wood alcohol)

6. Xylene (Xylol) and Toluene (Toluol): Aromatic Solvents

- strong solvents used in some fast dry enamels, and in some lacquers and lacquer thinners; contained in some paint removers
- toluene is somewhat faster drying than xylene
- should be used only in coatings where specifically recommended