

Painting wooden model Depots with rattle can spray paint.

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Why do I paint my depots with rattle can spray paints? There are a number of reasons.

1. Water based paints such as acrylics can warp the wood. These kit parts are very thin pieces of wood and warp easily.
2. I like an even coating of paint and spraying the paint gives me that.
3. I used to use an airbrush, but I wound up spending a lot of time cleaning the darn thing, so I don't use one anymore.
4. I use small amounts of paint but many colors all at once on different parts. I like the convenience of quickly being able to grab the next color and spray with the rattle can and then not having to clean a brush etc.

Okay let's back up a bit. I have a laser shop. I cut out kits for sale. I need to create a display model of each kit after the design is done. This display model needs to be painted. I need to build and paint the kit as quickly as possible to get it on the market. I am also testing the build of the kit one last time to make sure the painted kit goes together well.

I always paint the model parts before I assemble the kit. The main body is usually one color and the exterior trim is a contrasting color. I try to group my kit parts so like-painted parts are on the same sheet of wood. I usually paint the parts while still being held in the carrier wood. That way the small parts don't blow away.

There are other parts that I stain an oak color using brown shoe leather dye thinned with alcohol. The flooring, bay window desktop, interior window and door trim, ticket windows etc. are stained. I use a brush for this, and I stain both sided of the wood at the same time so that any warping is evened out with both sides being "wet". Allow to air dry by standing up the parts so air can get to both sides and the part dry evenly.

Roofs, after they are shingled, are usually painted with a texture spray paint, then top coated with a flat black color. A lot of my roof are removable and can be painted once assembled. The texture paint gives the roof a granular 3-tab roofing shingle look.

I have another tip sheet listing the common color spray paints that I use for various railroads, so I won't list them here. Sufficed to say I use either flat or satin spray paints but never gloss. The flat or satin sprayed in a light coat, soaks in the wood and loses any shine. I am not much for shiny depots. A word to the wise, if you try to paint a second coat, that coating will not soak in and it will start to get shiny.

Practice painting some of the scrap wood in the kit until you get a feel for how much spray paint to use. Too much paint and details start getting hidden. A light coat also looks more weathered as if the depot hasn't seen a coat of paint in a while.

I do a fair amount of painting, so I built a paint booth back in 1975. It still works great. I use it in my basement and vent it out the back of the house to keep the smell to a

minimum. I also use it sparingly in the winter and more-so in the other three seasons when the house is open more. I installed a dryer vent in the house rim joist and ran pvc pipe to it. The box has a light in it to see with and an explosion proof motor and fan. I never use a lot of paint and try to paint all the parts at one time. I run the exhaust fan a while after painting. DO NOT try to combine the dryer vent with the spray paint vent. Nothing good will come from trying that. Spray paint is explosive. I have plastic cake decorating lazy-Susan turntable in the booth that I can slowly spin while painting the parts.

The average person would just run out to the garage in the winter, spray the parts, and run back in the house with the parts before the painted parts temperature dropped below freezing. I do this also. Make sure to back the cars out first.

I use masking tape to mask off the parts I do not want painted. If the siding is two-toned, mask off each paint application. Remember the shiny second coat rule.

When I need to touch up a small nick in the paint job, I will spray a small amount of paint in the spray paint can cap, and use a small brush to touch up things. That small brush will need to be cleaned with paint thinner.

After the parts are painted, I take them upstairs into warmer part of the house, set them on a windowsill and allow the sun to dry them. They usually dry fairly fast and I can start assembling the kit right away. I can usually laser cut out a kit, spray paint it and assemble it all in one day. This is not the norm and I do not recommend you try this, but time is \$ for me. I like to assemble the kits in a bay window in our dining room using the dining room table. The extra sunlight helps me see when assembling the kits. I always use a cutting mat to cut on when using my hobby knife.

If you need to use water-based paints, use a flat rattle can spray primer on the wood first. That will seal the wood and help prevent the water soaking in, warping the wood.

I think that “covers it”. Have fun modeling.