



This year's Paint Buyer's Guide is loaded with all the information you need for choosing the correct paint for your application.

If you're a beginner, you may wonder what types of paints are best suited to your chosen surface. Although many airbrush experts stress that becoming a pro means lots of experimentation, our charts will help steer you in the right direction and hopefully eliminate much of the frustration new airbrushers encounter. For each paint product featured in the guide, we've checked off a list of manufacturer-recommended surfaces on which to use the paint. Simply find your desired painting surface at the top right of the chart and see which paints are best for that surface. In the charts, you'll also find information on paint base, thinning, additives and finish. We've also included a directory with phone numbers, addresses and Web sites for all the paint makers included in the guide.

There are roughly five types of paint—acrylics, inks and dyes, oils, urethanes, and watercolors. Each one has its own set of pros, cons and recommended surfaces, so before you start a project, take a moment to review your needs and choose the correct paint.

**Acrylics:** Of all the paint options for airbrush, these are the most versatile and easiest to use. You can use these paints on just about any surface, including fabric, canvas and acetate. They spray evenly through an airbrush and have short dry times, which means you don't have to wait long between coats. If you thin acrylic paints properly, you can even use them to achieve a transparent effect. Some brands make this even easier by offering ready-mixed transparent paints.

When acrylic paints dry, they are very strong. The pigment in acrylics is bound with plastic, allowing the paints to stand up to just about anything, including water. The notable exception to this, however, is alcohol. The good news for frisket lovers is that acrylic paints are hardy enough to withstand this type of masking, especially when compared to watercolors or gouache.

Be sure to shake acrylic paint before using; it can separate if not homogenized. Also, when spraying acrylic textile paint, you need to use a relatively high air pressure (40 to 60 psi) to more effectively force the color into the fabric. Another way to ensure that you're getting the most from your acrylic paint is to heat-set your fabric after painting. Tip: Acrylic paints can be very difficult to remove from the inside of your airbrush, so make sure you clean up right away. The longer you wait, the harder it will be to clean your airbrush.

**Inks and Dyes:** Another great choice for airbrush use. These thin pigments are easy to spray with an airbrush and require a low psi. A top choice of commercial illustrators, inks and dyes provide brilliant color on paper and illustration board. If you use paper, it should be extremely fine-grained because any textures will show through your paint. A small drawback to using inks and dyes is that your ready-to-use color choices are relatively limited, but you can easily mix them, allowing for creative custom colors. In fact, most jars come with an eyedropper on the lid, giving you the ability to precisely fine-tune your color mixtures. Caution: although your colors will be vibrant, exposure to light causes fading.

With inks, you should always shake the bottle first, because the pigment can separate. As with acrylics, we recommend that you clean your airbrush immediately after working with inks. Tip: Avoid letting your hands come in contact with the art. The oil in your skin can wreak havoc on your work, turning a first-rate paint job into a splotchy nightmare. We recommend using cotton gloves when you work with inks.

**Oils:** Oil paints provide intense and durable colors, but using them with an airbrush can be tricky. Oil paints predate the airbrush by hundreds of years, so they weren't exactly designed with our tool in mind! But it is certainly possible to airbrush with oil paints. The first step is to thin the oils with turpentine or mineral spirits at about a 60/40 paint-to-thinner ratio. Add the thinner working from the bottom and don't shake the mixture.

Because of their slow dry time, oils are difficult to use with frisket. Make sure your paint has dried thoroughly between coats and when applying any masks. Thinning helps speed up drying times. As with any paint, clean your airbrush thoroughly and promptly after spraying use.

**Urethanes:** Unlike many other types of paint, urethanes are extremely durable. They are designed for heavy-duty work on cars, motorcycles, boats and other such surfaces, and can withstand the elements. These tough-as-nails paints can be covered in clearcoat, sanded and polished. Urethanes contain much more pigment than lighter-weight acrylics, which helps explain their rugged strength. Because they do not dry by water evaporation, urethanes require a catalyst or hardener to dry them.

Urethanes come in two varieties: single-stage and two-stage. Single-stage urethanes combine their pigments with a clearcoat material, eliminating the need for a separate clear finish application. Although single-stage urethanes have lengthy dry times, you can sand and polish them as soon as they're dry. Two-stage urethanes have a dull finish when applied and need the addition of a clearcoat to provide luster. Your color options with two-stage urethanes are plentiful with opaques, pearls and transparents. Although you will have the extra step of applying clearcoat, your dry time is much shorter.

Urethanes require special caution when sprayed. Use a respirator and good ventilation to minimize your exposure to fumes.

**Watercolors:** Watercolors are perfect for airbrush because their thin makeup allows for very even and easy spraying. The con: watercolors lack the durability of acrylics and urethanes. Watercolors won't hold up when exposed to the elements, especially moisture; the same water that binds the pigments will destroy the paint once it's applied to a surface. This is why watercolors are generally limited to illustration and fine art.

Since watercolors are transparent, you should apply them in thin coats, building layer upon layer until you achieve your desired depth. Remember that hints of earlier coats will show through the layers. This makes it especially difficult to paint over a mistake when using watercolors. However, gouache, an opaque version of watercolors, is suped up with white paint to achieve opacity. Gouache has all the airbrush-friendly traits of watercolor, but it effectively covers mistakes, and because it's thicker, you don't need to apply as many coats.

You can purchase watercolors in tubes or cakes, or you can get them pre-mixed and ready to spray. Simply add distilled water to the cakes or tubes, and you're ready to airbrush. Frisket poses some challenges when working with watercolors. The adhesive can easily pull your paint off the surface. Also, once dry, watercolors can crack if forced to bend, so keep your completed artwork as rigid as possible.

Watercolors dry quickly. One of the best parts of working with watercolors is their easy clean-up. A good soaking will remove just about all the paint.

**AUTO-AIR COLORS**

**NOTE**

1. Tintable Sealer.
2. Clean gun in bath of 4008 Restorer.
3. Inspired by Blake McCully.
4. Base to 4600 Series Candy-Pigment Colors.
5. Used for detailed airbrushing. 4200 & 4700

Auto-Air Colors	Colors	Acrylic	Alcohol	Alkyd	Dye	Enamel	Epoxy	Gouache	Ink	Lacquer	Oil	Resin	Urethane	Watercolors	Airbrush-Ready	Must Thin	Water-Based	Petroleum-Base	Catalyst	Medium	Dyers	Oils	Retarder	Flow Improver	Automotive	Canvas	Fingernails	Ills. Board	Photo Retouching	Metal	Models & Craft	Leather	Plastic	Pottery / Ceramics	Textiles	Glass	Wood	Skin	Clearcoat	Flat	Matte	Semi-Gloss	Gloss	
4001 & 4002 Sealers <sup>1</sup>	2	●													●								●	●					●	●													●	
4004 Transparent Base	1	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4007 & 4008 Cleaners <sup>2</sup>	2													●	●									●	●					●	●													●
4011 & 4010 Flash Reducers <sup>3</sup>	2													●	●									●	●					●	●													●
4100 Series Aluminum Base <sup>4</sup>	3	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4200 Series Semi-Opaque	19	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4200 Series Transparent <sup>5</sup>	27	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4200 Series Fluorescent	8	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4300 Series Pearlized	14	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4300 Series Metallic	11	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4300 Series Iridescent	9	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4400 Series Gem Color-Shift	4	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4400 Series Flair Color-Shift	11	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4400 Series Hi-Lite	6	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4500 Series Hot Rod Sparkle	7	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4500 Series Cosmic Sparkle	7	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4500 Series Sparklescent	11	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4600 Series Candy-Pigment Colors	15	●													●									●	●					●	●													●
4700 Series Auto-Borne Colors <sup>5</sup>	17	●													●									●	●					●	●													●

**CREATEX AIRBRUSH COLORS**

**NOTE**

1. New product used to thin colors for fine atomization with small tip-sized airbrush & detail artwork.
2. Reduces tip dry.
3. Soak bath for airbrush after painting. Dissolves & discharges dried paint in airbrush.
4. Flow Improver: W100 Reducer may be substituted with Auto Air 4011 Flash Reducer

Creutex Airbrush Colors	Colors	Acrylic	Alcohol	Alkyd	Dye	Enamel	Epoxy	Gouache	Ink	Lacquer	Oil	Resin	Urethane	Watercolors	Airbrush-Ready	Must Thin	Water-Based	Petroleum-Base	Catalyst	Medium	Dyers	Oils	Retarder	Flow Improver	Automotive	Canvas	Fingernails	Ills. Board	Photo Retouching	Metal	Models & Craft	Leather	Plastic	Pottery / Ceramics	Textiles	Glass	Wood	Skin	Clearcoat	Flat	Matte	Semi-Gloss	Gloss					
Illustration Base <sup>1</sup>	1	●													●								●	●																								
Transparent Base	1	●													●								●	●																								
Matt Top Coat	1	●													●								●	●																								
Gloss Top Coat	1	●													●								●	●																								
Retarder <sup>2</sup>	1	●													●								●	●																								
Airbrush Cleaner	1	●													●								●	●																								
Airbrush Restorer <sup>3</sup>	1	●													●								●	●																								
Transparent Colors	29	●													●								●	●																								
Fluorescent Colors	7	●													●								●	●																								
Opaque Colors	14	●													●								●	●																								
Pearlized Colors	14	●													●								●	●																								
Iridescent Colors	8	●													●								●	●																								
Wicked Colors <sup>4</sup>	25	●													●								●	●																								●
Wicked Colors Detail	22	●													●								●	●																								●

The complete guide is available for viewing online at [www.airbrushaction.com](http://www.airbrushaction.com)



**AUTO AIR COLORS  
CREATEX COLORS**

14 Airport Park Rd.  
PO Box 120  
East Granby, CT 06026  
Phone: 1.800.243.2712  
Fax: 1.800.653.0643  
[www.createxcolors.com](http://www.createxcolors.com)  
[www.autoaircolors.com](http://www.autoaircolors.com)

**AQUA FLOW**

61 Maple Valley Drive  
Carrollton GA 30116  
Phone: 1.800.335.2710  
[www.aquaflow.com](http://www.aquaflow.com)

**BADGER AIRBRUSH**

9128 Belmont Ave.  
Franklin Park, IL 60131  
Phone: 800.Air.Brush  
[www.badgerairbrush.com](http://www.badgerairbrush.com)

**HOUSE OF KOLOR**

210 Crosby Street  
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■ BASE   
 ■ THINNING   
 ■ ADDITIVES   
 ■ SUBSTRATE   
 ■ FINISH

	COLORS	ACRYLIC	ALCOHOL	ALKYD	DYE	ENAMEL	EPOXY	GOUACHE	INK	LACQUER	OIL	RESIN	URETHANE	WATERCOLORS	AIRBRUSH-READY	MUST THIN	WATER-BASED	PETROLEUM-BASED	CATALYST	MEDIUM	DRYERS	OILS	RETARDER	FLOW IMPROVER
<b>BASF CORP.</b>																								
Limco	X	X		X		X				X					X	X	X		X				X	X
RM	X	X											X		X	X								
Glasurit	X	X											X		X	X								X
<b>GOLDEN ARTIST COLORS</b>																								
Golden Artist Colors	X	X													X	X								
Golden Fluid Acrylic Colors	X	X													X	X								
Golden Fluid Iridescent/Interference	X	X													X	X								
<b>ONE SHOT</b>																								
One Shot Chromatic	X	X	X		X						X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
<b>PPG INDUSTRIES</b>																								
Envirobase	X	X															X							
Global	X	X														X								
Hexa Auto Color	X	X														X								
Omni	X	X														X								

	AUTOMOTIVE	CANVAS	FINGERNAILS	ILLUS. BOARD	PHOTO RETOUCHING	METAL	MODELS AND CRAFTS	LEATHER	PLASTICS	POTTERY/CERAMICS	TEXTILES	GLASS	WOOD	SKIN	CLEARCOAT	FLAT	MATTE	SEMI-GLOSS	GLOSS
<b>BASF CORP.</b>																			
Limco	X	X					X	X		X	X		X		X	X			
RM	X						X		X						X	X			
Glasurit	X	X													X				
<b>GOLDEN ARTIST COLORS</b>																			
Golden Artist Colors																			
Golden Fluid Acrylic Colors	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	
Golden Fluid Iridescent/Interference	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	
<b>ONE SHOT</b>																			
One Shot Chromatic	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
<b>PPG INDUSTRIES</b>																			
Envirobase	X														X				
Global	X						X		X						X	X	X	X	X
Hexa Auto Color	X														X	X	X	X	X
Omni	X														X				

**NOTE SPACE**