

Tech Hotline

“Paintable” Sealants and Sto Coatings

Many sealants are said to be paintable, the most common being urethane sealants and STPE (Silyl-Terminated Polyether) sealants. Silicone sealants, on the other hand, are not paintable because most paints will not adhere to them. Exceptions to these general rules may exist, so it is always best to investigate the compatibility of a particular paint with a sealant. This Tech Hotline discusses some of the pros and cons of painting over sealants and presents testing of selected Sto Coatings over StoSeal™ STPE Sealant. The testing does not pertain to Sto textured finishes which are NOT RECOMMENDED to be applied over sealants.

One of the advantages of painting over sealant is that paint will protect the sealant from UV degradation and can prolong its life. Paint is also generally available in a much wider range of colors than sealant and paint can be applied continuously across the sealant without having to start and stop the paint application.

The disadvantages are that paint can split, crack and peel as the joint sealant ages and undergoes normal cycles of expansion and contraction. Some specifiers and engineers believe the extended service life of the sealant provided by a topcoat of paint outweighs the risk of cracking and peeling that may occur. Some building owners expect that the paint over the sealant will weather and perform the same as on other parts of the wall, which may not be the case. Important questions to ask when deciding to paint over sealant include:

- Does the sealant manufacturer claim that the sealant is paintable?
- What types of paints does the sealant manufacturer recommend or caution against using?
- What other restrictions, warnings, or limitations does the sealant manufacturer post if the sealant is painted?

- Has the sealant ever been used or tested with the specified paint before and, if so, were the results acceptable?
- How long does the sealant have to dry or cure before it can be painted?

Sto Corp. has tested adhesion of popular Sto coatings over StoSeal™ STPE Sealant. The Sto sealant was allowed to dry a minimum of 2 days at room temperature conditions 70°F (21°C) and 50% RH before painting. Cold temperatures and/or low humidity may require additional drying time before painting. Table 1 below reports results of testing.

Table 1: Adhesion of Sto Coatings to StoSeal™ STPE Sealant

Sto Coating	Adhesion ¹
80217 StoColor® Lotusan®	106 psi
80212 StoColor® Lastic	95 psi
80648 StoColor® Acryl Plus	126 psi

1. Note: all test results are an average of 2 samples.

Sto Corp. always recommends verifying adhesion before painting over any sealant. Due to differences in gloss and texture, color matched paints/coatings will not necessarily match adjacent materials, and the coating may crack or delaminate with age depending on joint movement.

The final decision on whether to paint over sealant should be made by the building owner or owner’s representative after considering all relevant information. Sealant manufacturers’ instructions, specifications and details for the application and use of their sealants should always be followed and the sealant manufacturer should be contacted in the event of any questions pertaining to the application of paint over sealant.