



Pettit Technical Bulletin

Applying Topside Finishes

What's better than a boat that looks good? The answer is simple, a boat that looks good and has superior protection from the elements all season long. Topside finishes do exactly that; provide your boat a unique look all the while making sure it's protected from the sun's UV rays, rain, wind and most importantly, the sea.

Which topside finish is best for you?

When it comes to selecting a topside finish, boaters look for a dependable, durable and visually enhancing product. Pettit Marine Paint provides topside finishes that excel in all of these areas, and exceed the expectations of even the most particular boater.



EasyPoxy has a new EZ-Poxy label – and is a modern, one-part polyurethane topside and deck enamel that offers brilliant shine and easy brushability. Its ultraviolet filters enhance the already superior gloss retention as well as the durability of the polyurethane, providing a lasting gelcoat-like brilliance that's easy to apply.



EZ-Decks – a super tough, polyurethane, non-skid performance deck finish containing a special grit that produces a slip-resistant finish on all decks and cabin soles. The durable, weather resistant finish is resistant to long term abrasion and abuse. Loaded with ultraviolet filters, this formula will fight against fading providing vibrant color retention for years with no peeling or cracking.

Prepping your surface

The success of your project will ultimately depend on your surface preparation. In order to yield optimal results with a finish that turns heads, preparation is key.

Surface: Bare Fiberglass

1. Thoroughly wash the entire surface that is to be painted with Pettit's 92 Bio Blue or 95 Fiberglass Dewaxer to remove all traces of mold release agents and wax.
*This must be done regardless of age
2. Sand the gelcoat with 80-120 grit sandpaper yielding a dull, frosty appearance.
3. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
4. If the surface is in excellent condition, proceed with the first finish coat of EasyPoxy, EZ-Poxy or EZ-Decks, otherwise proceed to step 5.
5. If the surface is rough or imperfections exist, repairs will need to be done first.
6. Fill all nicks and gouges with Pettit's 7050 EZ Fair Epoxy Fairing Compound according to label directions.
7. When the fairing compound has hardened, sand flush with the surface
8. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue
9. Apply a coat of Pettit's 6149 EZ Prime to smooth the surface and create a uniform base.
10. Sand the surface well.
11. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
12. Proceed with the first finish coat of EasyPoxy, EZ-Poxy or EZ-Decks.




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Surface: Clean, Bare Wood

1. Sand the surface smooth with 80-120 grit sandpaper.
2. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
3. Fill all screw heads or small holes with Pettit's 7050 EZ Fair Fairing Compound according to label directions.
4. Sand the compound flush with the surface.
5. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
6. Apply a coat of Pettit's 2018 EZ Wood Sealer to penetrate and seal the porous grain.
7. Follow with a coat of Pettit's 6149 EZ Prime until an evenly smooth base condition is reached.
8. Sand the coat with 80-120 grit sandpaper.
9. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
10. If necessary repeat steps 7-9 to apply a second coat.
11. Proceed with the first finish coat of Easypoxy, EZ-Poxy or EZ-Decks.




Expert Tip: All Pettit topside finishes should be applied with no greater than 3/16" nap roller.

Surface: Bare Wood that has been epoxied

1. Thoroughly scrub the surface with an ammonia/water solution.
2. Sand with 120 grit sandpaper.
3. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
4. Follow with a coat of Pettit's 6149 EZ Prime until an evenly smooth base condition is reached.
5. Sand the coat with 80-120 grit sandpaper.
6. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
7. If necessary repeat steps 2-6 to apply a second coat.
8. Proceed with the first finish coat of Easypoxy, EZ-Poxy or EZ-Decks.

Surface: Bare Steel

1. Sandblast or grind the surface to a clean, bright finish.
2. Remove blasting residue.
3. Immediately apply one coat of Pettit's 6980 Rustlok Primer.
4. Allow the coat to dry until tacky.
5. If the surface is rough apply one coat of Pettit's 6627 Tie-Coat Primer.
6. Sand the surface smooth with 220 grit sandpaper.
7. Solvent clean to remove sanding residue.
8. Repeat steps 5-7 until a perfectly smooth, uniform base is reached.
9. Proceed with the first finish coat of Easypoxy, EZ-Poxy or EZ-Decks.



Ask the experts: How many coats of Easypoxy, EZ Poxy or EZ Decks should I apply?
We recommend at least 2 coats of all three products to be applied over existing finishes. Bare woods and metals may require more coats depending on the shape or primers/sealers previously used.

Surface: Bare Aluminum Boats, Masts & Spars

1. Solvent clean the surface until it is free of oil and grease.
2. Remove oxidation and etch the surface with medium grit emery cloth.
3. Remove sanding residue.
4. Apply one thin, "wet" coat of Pettit's 6455 Metal Primer.
5. Allow the coat two hours to dry.
6. If surface smoothing is desired, use Pettit's 6149 EZ Prime over the 6455 Metal Primer.



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7. Sand the coat with 220 grit sandpaper.
8. Remove sanding residue.
9. If necessary repeat steps 6-8 to apply a second coat.
10. Proceed with the first finish coat of Easyoxy or EZ Poxy.

Surface: Previously Painted

*If paint is in good, sound condition:

1. Scrub the entire surface with Pettit 92 Bio Blue Hull Surface prep and a scotch brite pad.
2. Thoroughly sand smooth with 150 grit sandpaper.
3. Solvent clean or wipe down with a tack rag to remove sanding residue.
4. Proceed with the first finish coat of Easyoxy, EZ Poxy or EZ-Decks.

*If paint is old or in poor condition:

1. Remove the paint by sanding or using a paint and varnish remover.
2. Proceed with the instructions for the appropriate bare surface system.

To Create Non-Skid Decks

1. Add Pettit 9900 Skidless Compound to the mixed Easyoxy.
2. Stir the mixture continuously to insure the compound is thoroughly dispersed and remains in suspension.
3. Follow the appropriate application system, applying a minimum of 2 coats of the mixture.
4. Apply a coat of Easyoxy without the 9900 Skidless Compound to all areas requiring a non-skid surface then sprinkle or broadcast the 9900 Skidless Compound into the wet Easyoxy coat.
5. Allow the coat to dry overnight and then carefully brush out all loose 9900 Skidless Compound.
6. Apply another thin, even coat of Easyoxy to the surface.

*For decks that have a pre-molded, non-skid embossment:

1. Wash the surface with Pettit 92 Bio Blue or 95 Fiberglass Dewaxer.
2. Abrade the area thoroughly with bronze wool.
3. Solvent clean the surface to remove residue.
4. Proceed with the first finish coat of Easyoxy.
 - For an improved, non-skid texture add Pettit 9900 Skidless Compound to the Easyoxy or EZ-Poxy before application.
 - For a semi-gloss finish for decks and interiors add Pettit 3106 EZ Poxy Semi-Gloss White to the EZ Poxy before application.
 - For a custom, satin look add Pettit 9080 EZ-Poxy Satin Additive to the Easyoxy before application.

Applying the Finish

You've picked your topside finish, you've prepped your surface and now it's time for the grand finale – applying the finish and reaping all of the benefits of a beautiful, vibrant and seriously protected boat.

There are two methods of application favored when applying a topside finish: the roll and tip method and an airless sprayer.

Roll and Tip Method

1. Apply paint to the roller. You should have enough paint loaded into the roller that you do not have to stop and reload the roller before tipping, but you do not want the paint dripping off of the roller.



Expert Tip: When applying topside finishes, if you are going to be using more than 1 quart or 1 gallon, you should purchase quarts or gallons with the same batch number on the top of the can to maintain color consistency.



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2. Apply the paint to the surface with the roller painting in an arms length area, making sure to get good coverage.
 - Be sure to paint in at least two directions – opposing diagonals or horizontally and then vertically to get complete coverage.
 - Finish rolling paint onto the edge where your next pass will start. There should be some overlap here to continue paint flow.
3. Now, using your foam or bristle brush, lightly dip the edge of the brush into your paint supply.
4. Remove any excess paint, the tip should be just wet enough to glide on top of the paint.
5. Run the tip of the brush end over your paint. You may see a faint brush mark as you are doing this.
6. Drag the brush end in the opposite direction you rolled the paint on to remove any roller marks or stipple.
7. Hold the brush on a slight angle as to glide over the top of the painted surface without removing significant amounts of paint. Do not use a lot of pressure.
 - Any brush marks created will quickly disappear as the paint self levels
8. Apply paint to the roller again following step 1.
9. You must start at the end while slightly overlapping your last wet edge to maintain paint flow.
10. Continue with steps 2-9 until the entire surface has been painted.
 - After completing the project using the roll and tip method you will be tempted to go back and retouch some areas. It is important that you DO NOT do so. Slight imperfections will be taken out by either self leveling of the paint or they can be addressed by the second coat.
11. Allow adequate drying time.
12. Sand the first coat lightly with 200 grit sandpaper.
13. Remove excess sanding residue with a tack cloth, vacuum or air hose.
14. Repeat steps 1-10 for subsequent coats of finish.

Conventional and Airless Spraying

1. For conventional spray application, thin the finish with 15-20% of Pettit Spraying Thinner. For airless spray application, thin the finish with 5% of Pettit 121 Spraying Thinner and utilize a .011-.015 inch diameter tip for application.
2. Apply one thin, even coat per day
 - When applying the paint you can apply in opposite directions to ensure proper overlapping and paint coverage.
 - Applying two or more coats per day or excessively heavy films (greater than 4 wet mils) will lead to insufficient, thorough drying of the paint and will result in soft paint films.
3. Allow the coat to dry overnight.
4. Lightly sand the coat with 220 grit sandpaper.
5. Apply next coat of finish.
6. Continue steps 1-5 until the finish is satisfactory.

Maintaining the Finish

Once your boat has been prepped and painted there are only two things left to do – show it off and maintain its features.

Easypoxy and EZ-Poxy can be polished and waxed after a 7 day cure time. It is especially important to allow the finish to completely cure prior to polishing and waxing to allow all solvents remaining in the paint to flash out. Premature waxing will trap the solvents in the paint making them soft.



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Frequently Asked Questions:

Why did the second coat of product I applied crinkle?

Crinkling will occur when the first coat is applied too heavy and wasn't given enough time to completely dry. To correct the issue, remove the cracked and crinkled coat completely. You may need to sand back to the first coating. If the coating is too soft, allow it to dry completely before trying to sand. Remove the sanding residue with a tack rag and solvent. Replace the second coating.

What happens if I get drips or dust in the finish?

Drips can occur when a coating is applied too thick. To prevent drips, apply thin coats. Applying several thin coats will often provide better results than a few thicker coats. If drips do occur, sand them out with 200 grit sandpaper with a slight overlap to the surrounding finish. You can then apply a new coat of finish across the entire surface to even out and blend the appearance.

Should dust get into the wet coating, allow it to dry completely. Once the coating is dry, sand back the surface just enough to remove the contaminants that have become lodged in the coating. Make sure to overlap the surrounding finish to even it out and then apply a new coat of finish making sure to blend the appearance.

Why is the finish taking so long to dry?

There are some very common reasons why it may take longer than described for the finish to dry.

High humidity or excessive moisture in the air, can prevent proper drying of finishes. If it is very humid out and you can wait until the next day to work out the project, try to do so. If not, bring your project into an air conditioned area or a room with a dehumidifier. Be sure to have the air conditioner pulling in air from the outside, not re-circulating indoor air, as poor ventilation will also extend dry times.

Applying thick coats, or excessively applied paint films, will take much longer to dry due to solvent entrapment. This occurs when the outside of the paint film dries faster than the inside, trapping solvents. The product will eventually dry, just wait it out. The finish will become harder and more durable over time as the solvents leave the film.

Temperatures 50°F and below will extend drying times considerably. If you are under time constraints we suggest moving your work to a warmer area. Applying the finish and allowing it to dry in a warmer workspace will increase its drying rate.

Why are there bubbles in my finish after I have applied it?

Bubbles can occur when applying finish with a brush because the action of brushing can agitate the surface and introduce air into the finish. Over brushing will introduce even more bubbles. The more you work a section, the thinner the film becomes and the faster the solvent evaporates, which does not leave enough time for the film to self level. When this happens, brush marks and bubbles aren't able to level themselves out.

To prevent this from occurring further, apply 10-15% more Pettit 120 Brushing Thinner to the finish mixture. This will allow the finish to dry slower, giving it more time to self level. If you do thin the finish, additional coats may be necessary to maintain the same protection as full strength coats because the added solvent will reduce the amount of resin in the finish. This method may be a bit more time consuming but it will prevent air bubbles and yield a better finish.