

Choosing the Right Primer for the Job

- **Ceramic Wall Tile** – Wall tile usually does not have the major wear and tear that a bathtub does, since it does not receive foot traffic or damage from dropped objects. Wall tile also does not usually have the soap scum build-up or heavy silicone contamination a bathtub does. Using a wipe-on primer on clean, contaminate-free unetched wall tile that is largely free of imperfections will save you a ton of time.
- **Porcelain Bathtubs** – Because of its ability to fill in minor imperfections and detect contamination left on the surface, a spray-on primer is the recommended primer for etched porcelain bathtubs.

Types of Primer

For priming porcelain and ceramic fixtures, there are 2 types of primer to choose from:

1. **Wipe-on** – A silane-based product, which the glass industry originally developed for its superior bonding capabilities. It works best when applied to unetched ceramic wall tile.
2. **Spray-on** – Epoxy primer, which has a long and proven record of accomplishment in the bath and kitchen refinishing industry, works best on etched porcelain bathtubs or etched ceramic wall tile.

Spray-On vs. Wipe-On Primer

Both types of primer have great adhesion properties. They each have different properties, however, of which you should be aware:

- **Application Time** - Wipe on primer, like NAPCO's Poly-Bond Primer, is simple to use and a major time saver. You do not need to mix it with anything, as it's a one-part product. Since you simply wipe it all over the surface with a lint-free cloth, you save spraying time. Not having to spray the primer also saves you the time that you would normally spend cleaning the spray gun before you add topcoat to the gun cup.
- **Shelf Life** - Wipe on primer has a shorter 6-month shelf life. Like medication, wipe on primer quickly loses its efficacy after it has passed its expiration date. If you are not diligent about using wipe-on primer within 6 months of purchase, you risk getting poor adhesion, which can result in peeling. Spray-on primers, like NAPCO Epoxy Primer Resin, have much longer shelf lives. Most spray-on primers can easily last for a year or even two.

- **Coverage** - Spray-on primer comes in different tinted colors, like white or gray. Because they spray on like colored paint, you can easily see where there is good coverage or where you may have missed applying primer. Wipe-on primer goes on clear and glossy, so it is easier to miss spots on the fixture.
- **Contaminants** - Spray-on primer fish eyes when it encounters contaminants that you may have missed in the prep process. It's better to repair fish eyes that occur in the primer coat, than to have them occur later in the topcoat. Wipe-on primer does not fish eye at all when it encounters contaminants, which can lead to fish eyes in the topcoat that are often harder to fix.
- **Imperfections** - NAPCO Epoxy Primer is a medium build primer, which builds up with each successive coat that you apply. This building process helps fill in little pinholes and minor imperfections on the surface of the fixture. Since a wipe-on primer does not fill in imperfections, you have to spend more time skim coating those tiny pinholes with chip filler before you prime.

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