



SOLVENTS USED WITH PAINTS AND COATINGS

Solvents differ in what they can dissolve, odor, and flammability. It is important that the correct solvent be used to thin or clean up a coating.

➔ **All solvents must be used with proper safety precautions**

1. Mineral Spirits: A Mixture of Aliphatic Hydrocarbons; Similar to Lighter Fluid and Charcoal Lighter
 - used for most oil based and alkyd paints, primers and varnishes
 - “Paint Thinner” may be mostly, or all, mineral spirits
 - add to paint only when necessary; use to clean brushes, spills, etc.
 - not effective for cleaning up dried paint on brushes, etc.
2. Odorless Mineral Spirits: Mineral Spirits Processed to have Minimal Levels of Aromatic and Sulfur-containing Compounds
 - a reduced odor version of mineral spirits; used in the same way
 - same ventilation and other safety requirements as with mineral spirits
 - may be more expensive than regular mineral spirits
3. VM&P Naphtha (Varnish Maker’s and Painter’s Naphtha)
 - similar to mineral spirits; used by professional painters as paint thinner
 - somewhat faster drying than mineral spirits
4. Lacquer Thinner: Blend of Different Solvent Types
 - used specifically for pigmented & clear lacquers, some wood fillers, etc., that specify use of *lacquer thinner*
 - is extremely flammable; can soften plastics and paints
5. Alcohol: Denatured Ethyl Alcohol Is The Type Used
 - “denatured” means the alcohol has been treated to make it undrinkable
 - used with shellac and shellac-based primers
 - do not substitute isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) or methanol (wood alcohol)
6. Xylene (Xylol) and Toluene (Toluol): Aromatic Solvents
 - strong solvents used in some fast dry enamels, and in some lacquers and lacquer thinners; contained in some paint removers
 - toluene is somewhat faster drying than xylene
 - should be used only in coatings where specifically recommended