

What's all this about paint going metric?

The Paintmakers Association
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WHY GO METRIC?

Britain's going metric. By 1975 we'll be buying our beer in litres, meat in kilos and furnishing fabrics in metres.

And the same will be so of paint, putty and plywood.

Why? Because 90% of the world's population is now using metric weights and measures - and Britain is following suit.

The construction industry is forging ahead with the change to the metric system. More than £2000 million worth of building work in this country has already been specified in metric terms.

For some time the Paintmakers Association has had a study group working to see how metrication will affect the paint trade, and what help the Association can give you during the gradual change-over which will begin next summer.

WHAT WILL IT MEAN?

Paint will be one of the first liquid commodities to be sold to the general public in metric containers.

One thing is clear-the change will need careful explanation to your customers.

The tradesman painter and the experienced do-it-yourselfer will have to change their thinking. To them a door now represents a quarter of a pint of gloss paint, or a familiar wall a quart of emulsion.

Most of us are not yet used to using decimals - we talk of 'half a gallon' or 'a quarter of a pint'. Instead of half a litre we are now going to have to talk about 500 millilitres.

There will be a tendency for customers to think of a litre as just another name for a pint. In fact a litre is nearer two pints!

And you can expect a big rise in the number of customers asking for advice about the covering power of the new metric volumes.

Because of all these things the new system must be explained clearly to the public, to avoid misunderstanding.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The new paint tins will be 5 litre, 2.5 litre, 1 litre, 500 millilitre (ml) and 250 ml.* The accompanying plastic template, sent to you with this leaflet, will show you:

- the equivalent Imperial volume for each of these new sizes.
- the exact dimensions of each metric tin.
- exactly how much more or how much less paint each metric tin holds than the Imperial measure it replaces.

A set of five litho-printed metric tins is available to you at cost (24s. 6d. incl. postage while stocks last) from the Paintmakers Association. Write to us if you would like a set.

* in addition 25 litre, 10 litre and 100 ml packs will be available.

WHEN WILL IT HAPPEN?

The first new metric tin you will see will be the 5 litre, starting in June 1971. It will contain white, an off-white or another fast moving colour.

This simple time-table shows when the first new metric containers will begin to appear:

5 litre	June 1971
2.5 litre	mid July 1971
1 litre	end August 1971
500 ml and 250 ml	October 1971

You should be prepared to expect mixed orders of metric and Imperial measures until the slower-moving colours are used up.

But to ensure the fastest possible changeover - and the minimum possible inconvenience to the merchant and retailer - the Paintmakers Association has recommended that once a manufacturer has started supplying a certain size and colour in a metric tin he should stop supplying that size and colour in an Imperial tin.

By this gradual and systematic phasing-out of the Imperial tins it will not be necessary for the makers to take them back.

The Paintmakers Association has recommended that there is no need for fundamental changes in can label design, and that the new tins should simply have the metric volume stated on them. By law - until there are changes in the weights and measures regulations - the Imperial equivalent will also appear, in brackets, after the metric volume. So the identity of a tin will be clear by referring to the statement of contents - metric first, followed by Imperial in brackets.

WHAT ABOUT PRICES?

When the new system is introduced the basic unit for all pricing will become the litre, and this is bound to bring about changes in the paint industry's traditional package price differentials. Clearly you'll pay more for a tin containing 10% more paint and less for a tin containing 12% less. By the time the new tins arrive on the scene prices will be in £p per litre, and individual manufacturers will be advising you of the details of the new price structure in their usual way.

THE RIGHT TIN FOR THE JOB?

The trickiest thing about paint going metric will be re-educating the tradesman and do-it-yourselfer to apply a new metric volume of paint to that mental picture of a door or a familiar wall; ensuring that your customer does not buy a little too little - or much too much - for the job.

To help you answer customers' questions a clear, simple reference chart will be sent to you free before next June. To solve problems like these, and to make sure that the customer is not taken by surprise when confronted for the first time by 250 millilitres of his or her favourite gloss paint, a Press publicity campaign is already being planned so that the monthly magazines and national and regional daily and weekly newspapers can publish details in May and June, when the first metric tins appear.

If you have any problems about paint going metric, please don't hesitate to write to us We'll do all we can to help you.

