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# *How to Properly Paint a Fire Hydrant*

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## *Equipment Needed*

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### **Personal Protection Equipment**

- Safety Vest
- Steel-Toed Boots
- Long Pants
- Work Gloves
- Sunscreen
- Insect Repellant
- Hair Tie for Long Hair



### **Other Materials**

- Wire Brush
- Flat General Use Paint Brush
- Safety Yellow Water-based Paint (or other assigned color)
- Disposable Rags
- Weed Eater or Shears



- Traffic Cones

### **Optional Materials**

- Rug or Blanket to Kneel on
- Bucket or Stool to Sit on

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## *Safety*

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Safety is key when operating a company vehicle, as well as when working near a roadway. It is important to take the necessary precautions for the safety of the maintenance technicians, other drivers, and pedestrians.

- **Utilizing the Vehicle**

- When operating a company vehicle, it is important for the driver to park the vehicle out of the street if possible, and if unable to keep the vehicle out of the street to park it off to the side and as out of the way as possible.
- After putting the vehicle in park, the driver should turn on the hazard lights. There are lights located on top front and top back of the vehicle. These lights will flash orange to alert passersby of the vehicle's stationary status.
- The driver should then be sure to adorn his or her safety vest and check to make sure the roadway is clear before exiting the vehicle.

- Upon exiting the vehicle, the driver should once again check to make sure the roadway is clear, before moving on to place traffic cones around the outside of the vehicle.



- The driver should also use the vehicle as a barrier between himself/herself and the road if possible.

- **Personal Safety**

- Proper clothing should be worn to protect the technicians from unnecessary injury as well as from the elements.
  - An orange or yellow safety vest
  - Denim jeans or long khaki pants
  - Steel-toed boots
  - Sturdy reusable gloves should be worn to prevent scrapes and cuts, but also to keep the skin clean of paint.
  - Long hair should be tied up or back away from the face to prevent the hair from getting tangled in equipment.
- The painter must also be sure to protect himself/herself from the elements.
  - Sunscreen should be worn and applied continuously while working outside.
  - The painter should also apply insect repellent.

- The painter must also carry water or Gatorade to prevent dehydration or overheating.
- Likewise, the painter should take cool down breaks to prevent overexposure to the sun which can cause heat stroke.



- Vigilance
  - It is also important that the painter remain aware of his or her surroundings. This means being cognizant of:
    - Others in the area
    - Dogs or other animals



- Vehicles
- Pedestrians
- Bicyclists
- Weather

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## *Preparing the Hydrant for Painting*

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There are several steps that must be completed before the hydrant will be ready to be painted.



- I. Inspect the area. Check to see if any maintenance on the hydrant is needed, as well as if landscaping must be done (i.e. are there any leaks, is the hydrant surrounded by tall grass or weeds?)

Note: homeowners are responsible for landscaping around the hydrant; however, if grass or weeds are high, use a weed eater or outdoor shears to remove vegetation.



- II. Take the wire brush and gently knock any loose paint or rust off the hydrant. If need be, use the wires to sand down the surface of the hydrant until it is somewhat smooth.
- III. After knocking any paint chips or rust off the hydrant, take a disposable rag and wipe the hydrant clean of water, dirt, grass, spiderwebs, or any other foreign substance that may prevent the paint from sticking.
- IV. Next, gather the rest of the materials needed (i.e. paint, paint brush, rug or blanket, stool, etc.)

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## *Painting the Hydrant*

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After all the necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the hydrant is ready to be painted, it is time to begin.

- Place the paint can on a flat surface. It is recommended that something be placed underneath the can to contain any spillage that may occur. Remove the lid and stir the paint.
- If the caps or bonnets are to be a different color than the body of the hydrant, then those areas should be painted first. By doing so, it allows those areas to dry first in case a second coat needs to be applied, and so any drips on the body can be covered up.
- When all areas of the hydrant have been painted, look it over to see if a second coat is needed, or if there are any touch-ups that should be done.

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## Clean Up

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After the painting is completed, it is time to pack up all the materials used and to assess for any issues to the hydrant or the surrounding area.

- Wipe the paint brush against the lip of the paint can, then wrap it in plastic wrap to preserve it.
- Place the lid on the can, then place a rag over top of it, and gently tap the lid closed with a rubber mallet. The rag will prevent any paint from spattering when the lid is being closed.
- Gather any and all materials and place them back into the vehicle in their designated spot.
- Next, go back to the hydrant and look around for any spills that may have happened.
  - If a spill has occurred, use a disposable rag to sop up as much as possible, then use a camera to document the spill.
- Be sure to double check the site to make sure all materials have been placed back in the vehicle and that nothing is left behind.
- When clean up is complete, follow the safety procedures for entering the roadway to gather the cones, and then enter the vehicle.

- Once everything has been placed in the vehicle and the driver is safely within the vehicle



as well, the task is complete.

Reading this piece of technical writing will help the reader to better understand the process of painting a fire hydrant. Many people are unaware of everything that goes into painting the fire hydrant. People are also unaware of all the precautions that must be taken as well. Failure to follow procedures could result in injury, illness, or property damage. After reading this particular feature, people will be more likely to see that painting a fire hydrant is not as easy as it seems.

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