

# Metal Finishes

Trades descriptions for door and window hardware

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# dhf Best Practice Guide: Metal Finishes - Trades descriptions for door and window hardware

## Foreword

Many will be familiar with the proverb “All that glitters is not gold.” The implication is that appearances can be deceptive. In terms of door hardware, this is not necessarily a bad thing. In the interests of aesthetics, great efforts are made to provide door hardware of matching appearance for building projects. Some materials do not lend themselves to certain processes or end-uses. In such cases, another material must be used, and then “finished” to match the rest of the hardware.

It is important that the purchaser or specifier understands what is being supplied, so that there is no element of unrealistic expectation - or indeed deception - in the transaction.

The purpose of this document is to provide the manufacturer, supplier, specifier and end user with agreed methods of describing finishes, and to thereby avoid misunderstandings.

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## The need for finishes

There are two main reasons for applying finishes:

**Protection** - for example, steel is prone to going rusty; aluminium and brass will oxidise if not protected. An applied surface finish can help to exclude damp and other types of atmospheric attack. A surface finish might additionally change the appearance of the original material, e.g. bright zinc plating or colour powder coating on steel.

**Matching other hardware on a door** - a certain metal might be needed for strength - for example steel, or ease of fabrication - such as mazzac. But if the specification calls for polished brass, a brass or industrial gold plating on top of the base metal will be necessary to give the required appearance. In many instances, the finish serves both to protect AND improve or change the appearance of the item. In marketing terms, "finish" describes what the surface of the material looks like. It is not necessarily a description of the actual surface material. An example is the finish of door closers, where the covers and arm assemblies might be required to match stainless steel lever furniture and pull handles. The base material of the cover might be steel or even plastic, as stainless steel can be expensive, and does not lend itself to some shaping processes. The required appearance might be achieved through satin chrome or satin nickel plating, or with the use of coloured lacquers, or a combination of these processes. The resulting door closer will have the appearance of stainless steel but will have the corrosion resistance level as shown in its classification to EN 1154, where provided. This classification might be lower than that expected of stainless steel. This means that the closer would be suitable for dry, internal conditions, but it would not withstand atmospheric attack in a coastal location. It is essential to check test evidence to establish actual performance capabilities.

Another example is the use of industrial gold plate as a substitute for brass in damp locations such as bath or shower rooms. Brass or brass plate could be difficult to keep pristine in such conditions, whereas the gold plate is unaffected by the damp.

This Code of Practice strongly recommends that the word "finish" be used wherever the description of the material might otherwise lead to a wrong conclusion about the surface or substrate. Suppliers should also state somewhere in their literature what the wear and corrosion properties of their finishes are likely to be.

Users should satisfy themselves that the finish offered is suitable for the conditions in which they will place it, and be aware that "looks like" does not mean "performs like".

### Examples of the use of "finish" in a description:

Cabinet knob, satin stainless steel finish = looks like satin stainless steel but is not that material.

Lock forend and strike, brass finish = looks like brass but are not solid brass components.

## Terms in common usage

Where the following terms are used, the purchaser or end-user should expect the product to be as the descriptions following:

### Self colour

This means that the material from which the product is made has received no surface finish. An example is extruded brass butts, where natural oxidation of the surface over a period of time is accepted. Cast iron items are often supplied self colour, as the surface texture and colour of the cast iron are features in themselves.



### Silver-coloured finishes

#### CP - Chrome Plate

A plating of the metal Chromium onto a suitable substrate, with a bright or mirror finish.



#### SCP - Satin Chrome Plate

A plating of the metal Chromium onto a suitable substrate, with a satin or brushed finish.



#### SNP - Satin Nickel Plate

A plating of the metal Nickel onto a suitable substrate, with a satin or brushed finish.



#### SSS - Satin Stainless Steel

Stainless steel of a recognised grade or type, with a satin or brushed finish.



#### SSSF -

**Satin Stainless Steel Finish,** sometimes shown SSF A coating on top of a substrate, with a satin or brushed finish which looks like satin stainless steel.

**PSS - Polished Stainless Steel**

Stainless steel of a recognised grade or type, with a bright or mirror finish.



**PSSF - Polished Stainless Steel Finish,**

sometimes shown PSF A coating on top of a substrate, with a bright or mirror finish which looks like polished stainless steel.

**SAA - Satin Anodised Aluminium**

Aluminium which has been anodised to a specified depth, giving a satin finish. (Note: the anodising process will give a slightly different finish depending on the method of manufacture used to form the item. Stamped, extruded and cast components might look slightly different when assembled as a single item. Manufacturers try to minimise this, but an exact match is not usually possible. An example is a cast aluminium lever handle on a pressed backplate. The tone and shade of silver should be similar, relative to the price of the item).



**PAA - Polished Anodised Aluminium (or PA - Polished Anodised)**

Aluminium which has been anodised to a specified depth, then polished to give a shiny finish. (Note: the anodising process will give a slightly different finish depending on the method of manufacture used to form the item. Stamped, extruded and cast components might look slightly different when assembled as a single item. Manufacturers try to minimise this, but an exact match is not usually possible. An example is a cast aluminium lever handle on a pressed backplate. The tone and shade of silver should be similar, relative to the price of the item).



**BZP - Bright Zinc Plate**

A plating of the metal Zinc onto a suitable substrate, with a bright finish.



**AB - Armour Bright**

Malleable iron which has been sheradized and then burnished to a bright finish.



**Gold-coloured finishes**

**PB - Polished Brass**

Solid brass which has been polished to a shiny finish. It might also have a clear protective film applied, or have been chemically sealed.



**PBF - Polished Brass Finish**

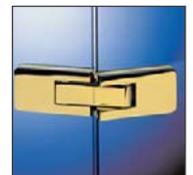
Possibly brass plating on a substrate, with a shiny finish. It might also have a clear protective film applied. Alternatively, any other finish giving the appearance of polished brass, such as industrial gold plate.

**EPB - Electro-plate Brass**

Brass plating on a substrate, with a shiny finish. It might also have a clear protective film applied.

**GP - Industrial Gold Plate**

Gold plating on a substrate, with a shiny finish which is similar to polished brass.



**SB - Satin Brass**

Solid brass with a satin or brushed finish. It might also have a clear protective film applied, or have been chemically sealed.



**Gold Anodised**

Aluminium which has been anodised to a specified depth, with a satin or polished finish. The gold colouring is introduced either during or after the anodising process, and is no deeper than the anodic film. (Note: the anodising process will give a slightly different finish depending on the method of manufacture used to form the item. The introduction of colour can exaggerate the differences.



Stamped, extruded and cast components might look different shades of gold when assembled as a single item. There is also the possibility of slight variation from batch to batch. Manufacturers try to minimise this, but an exact match is not usually possible. Gold anodised covers shades from a light champagne to deep gold.)

## Bronze-coloured finishes

### BMA - Bronze Metal Antique

Real bronze, usually highly polished, which has undergone further treatment to give a dark, iridescent finish to the metal.



### IBMA - Imitation Bronze Metal Antique (or IB - Imitation Bronze)

Any dark brown finish intended to look like bronze, often on a brass base.



### Bronze Anodised

Aluminium which has been anodised to a specified depth, with a satin or polished finish. The bronze colouring is introduced either during or after the anodising process, and is no deeper than the anodic film. (Note: the anodising process will give a slightly different finish depending on the method of manufacture used to form the item. The introduction of colour can exaggerate the differences.



Stamped, extruded and cast components might look different shades of bronze when assembled as a single item. There is also the possibility of slight variation from batch to batch. Manufacturers try to minimise this, but an exact match is not usually possible. Bronze anodised covers a variety of shades).

## Black-coloured finishes

### Black iron (reproduction Tudor style door furniture)

Usually mild steel which has been formed or occasionally cast and then epoxy-powder coated to provide a dull black durable finish.



Some imported furniture might be painted black. The paint finish is less durable, as it is more easily damaged and removed.

There are no set standards for finishing black iron, so specifiers should check before deciding to ensure that the finish offered is acceptable for the application intended.

### Black japanned

Originally a shiny oil-based black lacquer finish, baked onto bare metal to give a durable finish less prone to cracking and peeling than ordinary paint. In recent times the term has been applied to several shiny black paint or powder coat finishes, some of which might not be so durable. The term is best viewed as descriptive of an appearance rather than a process. Specifiers should check to ensure that the finish offered is suitable for the application intended.



## Guild of Architectural Ironmongers

Founded in 1961, the GAI represents the majority of Architectural Ironmongers in the UK. The GAI serves to further all aspects of architectural ironmongery by promoting the interchange of information to encourage better products design and high professional standards of ironmongery scheduling and specification. GAI has also expanded its offering to include overseas clients, who are increasingly taking advantage of its comprehensive education programme.

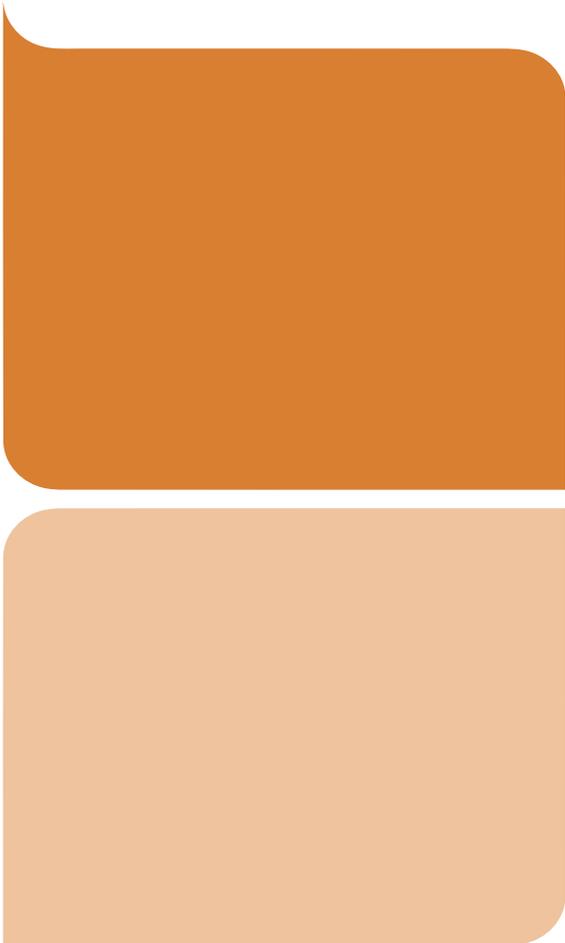


## Master Locksmiths Association

The MLA is the leading trade association for the locksmithing industry. It is recognised as the authoritative body by the police, government, insurers and other such groups. MLA licenced companies can provide customers with peace of mind regarding the security of their property. Its members undergo strict vetting and regular inspections.







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