

Repaint & Repair

The French Steel Company

Repainting steel doors with matte black automotive spray paint can give a professional finish if done properly.

Here is a thorough, step-by-step guide to help you achieve the best results:

Materials Needed:

- Matte black automotive spray paint (make sure it is suitable for metal surfaces)
- Primer (specifically for metal surfaces)
- Sandpaper (various grits: 120, 220, and 400 grits)
- Painter's tape
- Plastic or drop clothes to protect surrounding areas
- Tack cloth or microfiber cloth
- Paint respirator mask
- Safety goggles and gloves
- Paint thinner or degreaser
- Clean, lint-free rags
- Fine steel wool (optional)
- Clear coat spray (optional, if you want added protection)

Step 1: Preparation of the Work Area

1. Move the door to a ventilated area: If possible, remove the door from its hinges to make the process easier. If not, ensure the area is well-ventilated and protect the surroundings.
2. Lay drop clothes or plastic: Cover the floor and any nearby surfaces with a drop cloth to catch overspray.
3. Use painter's tape: Apply painter's tape around door handles, hinges, windows, or any other parts you do not want to be painted.

Step 2: Clean the Steel Door

1. Remove dirt, grease, and grime: Use a clean rag and a degreaser or paint thinner to clean the surface of the steel door. This will help ensure the paint adheres well.

2. Rinse with water and dry: After degreasing, wipe the surface with a damp cloth to remove any residue and then let the door dry completely.

Step 3: Sand the Steel Door

1. Sand the surface: Start with 120-grit sandpaper to remove any rust, peeling paint, or imperfections. This roughs up the surface so the primer and paint can adhere better.
2. Progressively sand with finer grits: Move to 220-grit sandpaper to smooth the surface and remove deep scratches. Finally, use 400-grit sandpaper to refine the surface for a smooth finish.
3. Wipe away dust: Use a tack cloth or microfiber cloth to remove any sanding dust. Ensure the surface is clean and dust-free before applying primer.

Step 4: Apply Primer

1. Select the right primer: Use a primer designed for metal surfaces. A self-etching primer works well for steel doors.
2. Spray a thin coat: Hold the can about 10-12 inches away from the surface and spray smooth, even strokes. Apply a light, even coat to avoid drips.
3. Let the primer dry: Follow the manufacturer's instructions for drying time (usually about 30 minutes to 1 hour). You may need to apply a second coat for better coverage. Let the second coat dry thoroughly.
4. Lightly sand the primer: Once the primer is dry, lightly sand it with 400-grit sandpaper to smooth out any imperfections, then wipe the surface with a tack cloth.

Step 5: Apply the Matte Black Automotive Spray Paint

1. Shake the spray can: Shake the can vigorously for at least 1-2 minutes before use to mix the paint thoroughly.
2. Test the spray pattern: Spray a small amount on a test surface to ensure the paint is spraying evenly and without splattering.
3. Start painting: Hold the can 10-12 inches away from the door and spray it in even, overlapping strokes. Start at the top and work your way down. Keep the spray moving to avoid heavy spots or drips.
4. Apply multiple thin coats: Apply 2-3 light coats rather than one heavy coat. Allow each coat to dry for about 15-20 minutes before applying the next one (refer to the paint's instructions for precise drying times).

5. Allow paint to cure: After the final coat, let the paint dry thoroughly. This may take several hours to a full day depending on the conditions and the paint you use.

Step 6: Apply a Clear Coat

1. Choose a matte or satin clear coat: If you want extra protection, apply a clear coat designed for use over automotive spray paint. Make sure it matches the matte finish of the black paint.
2. Spray the clear coat: Apply it in the same manner as the paint, with light, even coats.
3. Let the clear coat dry: Allow at least 24 hours for the clear coat to fully cure before handling or reinstalling the door.

Step 7: Clean Up and Inspect

1. Remove painter's tape: Carefully remove the painter's tape while the paint is still tacky to avoid peeling.
2. Inspect for imperfections: Check for any missed spots, drips, or uneven areas. If necessary, lightly sand imperfections with fine steel wool and apply touch-ups.
3. Let the door cure completely: If possible, allow the door to cure in a well-ventilated space for a couple of days before rehanging it.

Step 8: Reinstall the Door

Once the door has fully cured and you are satisfied with the finish, reinstall it on its hinges and enjoy your refreshed matte black steel door.

By following these steps, you will achieve a durable and smooth finish with the matte black automotive spray paint.