

Let's
**Talk
Tech**

ALUCOBOND® PLUS
GIVING SHAPE TO GREAT IDEAS

Custom Color Match Frequently Asked Questions

3A Composites USA offers custom color matching for architects and designers who look to innovate through the use of color. Numerous custom ALUCOBOND® PLUS finishes have been developed throughout our history. To provide a better understanding for the A&D community, the ALUCOBOND® PLUS Custom Color Department has addressed frequently asked questions.



Project: Treasure Island Resort & Casino
Location: Welch, MN
Architects: RSP Architects
Fabricator/Installer: Atomic Sheet Metal
General Contractor: Knutson Construction
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Custom Color Match: Frequently Asked Questions

How is paint applied to ALUCOBOND® PLUS?

The painted ALUCOBOND® PLUS finishes are applied via a coil coating process. This involves coiled aluminum sheet which is processed through cleaning and pretreatment of the aluminum followed by reverse roll application of the paint. The paint then moves through an oven for curing of the coating. Afterward the metal is cooled and re-coiled. The coils of painted metal are then processed into ALUCOBOND® PLUS composite. For spray painting of extrusions that compliment ALUCOBOND® PLUS material, it is suggested to contact paint supplier approved extrusion coaters.

Which comes first, panel color or extrusion?

It is best to choose the panel color first and then match the extrusion color to the panel, since the panel color is usually the largest surface area of a project. The panel color will be coil coated and the extrusion color will be spray coated. Please note different substrates will produce different color variations. It is easier to match a spray coated finish to a coil coated finish than to match a coil coated finish to a spray finish.

What is best for custom color matching, physical sample or paint number?

It is always best to color match to a physical sample. The actual painted sample that the owner, architect or color decision-maker selects and holds may have slight production color variations. The color formulator can achieve the best possible, closest color match when they have a physical sample or target to match to.

Why don't the paint codes match?

The paint supplier has to develop and match the selected color, taking into consideration the speeds, temperatures, equipment, primer, etc. of each individual coil coating line. Because each coil coating line has different operating parameters, the formulation (code) number may be different from supplier to supplier and production line to production line. This means the paint code number of the samples that 3A Composites USA submits will usually be different from the paint code in the project specifications provided by the paint supplier.

Why do coil coats and spray coats look different?

The method of paint application has an effect on the visual appearance of a color. This is especially true for colors containing mica or metallic flakes. The application method will affect the orientation of the metallic or mica flakes within the coating. This is one reason that coil coated versus spray applied colors appear visually different in color. The spray application lays the flakes down in a more random pattern than does the roll application of coil coating. This not only affects the color, but the reflectivity, gloss and sheen of the finish. Metallic colors that appear to be a good visual match at one angle, may appear different at other angles.

Slight variations in color should be expected due to differences in raw material, suppliers, application, etc. For example, a metallic finish from a spray painter will not be a perfect match to a coil coater. Likewise, a common color, e.g. Champagne metallic might not match between paint vendors.



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Does lighting effect the color?

Make sure to compare color matches visually in outdoor light if the project is an exterior application. Likewise, if it is an interior application, it is best to view under the lighting type in the intended space. Colors will appear visually different under different light sources, at varying angles and different times of day.

Why is your Silver different from their Silver?

Visually review all color matches. A matching name does not mean the color is a match. Silver from one supplier may not be the same as Silver from a second supplier. This is true for all color names.

Why are there lines in my custom color sample?

When a custom color match is requested, it is formulated and prepared in a laboratory setting. To control the paint thickness in a laboratory application, special application rods have to be used to accurately control the paint to the correct thickness. These application rods result in drawbar lines for custom color matches.

Will the ALUCOBOND® PLUS panels have drawbar lines?

The production application of the paint will not exhibit the drawbar lines that are visible in the laboratory prepared samples. The drawbar method of paint application is the closest application method to simulate continuous coil coating. Alternate application methods such as spraying will affect the orientation of the metallic flake within the coating resulting in a different color and appearance. During production, the paint is applied in a continuous coil coating process. In this process, large rolls are used to apply the paint onto the aluminum coil, as it is unrolled. This type of paint application produces a very consistent high quality finish. Once the paint is applied it immediately moves into an oven where the coating is cured at 465 degrees metal temperature.

Can I match to Pantone (PMS)?

Matching Pantone (PMS) colors is difficult. PMS colors are ink, which is applied over white paper. The white paper adds or helps build the visual color. This is referred to as “mass tone” by many color matchers. PMS color matches over metal may be difficult or impossible to achieve the same brightness as ink over white paper.

Why is the color different depending on what angle I view it from?

Metallic, Mica, Spectra, Brushed, Print, Textured and Anodized finishes are directional. This is extremely important to remember when planning, fabricating and erecting projects. Panels that are erected perpendicular or opposite each other will look different. For best possible color consistency, maintain panel directionality throughout the project. For more detailed information about finish consistency, please refer to [Let's Tech Talk: Finish Consistency](#).

How can I best ensure color consistency?

Not only are Metallic, Mica, Spectra, Brushed, Print, Textured and Anodized finishes directional they are also batch specific, varying in shade or color between batches. Avoid mixing different production batches and maintain the same panel directionality for best possible color consistency. Customers and specifiers must ensure that sufficient material is ordered to fulfill projects in one batch. For more detailed information about finish consistency, please refer to [Let's Tech Talk: Finish Consistency](#).

Custom Color Requests

If you require a custom color for your next project, our color technicians will strive to match your desired color. Please note, custom color orders are subject to set-up charges and require a 1,000 sq. ft. minimum per color.

To ensure that we identify your color correctly, we require either:

- A hand sample of at least 1" x 1", OR
- Pantone®, RAL, NCS or paint code reference

Please reach out to your local Sales Manager to aid with the process at: alucobondusa.com/sales_rep

Send the color sample along with your name, company name, address, phone number & email, as well as the project name, project location, type of finish and gloss level to:

3A Composites USA
Attn: Color Lab
208 West Fifth Street, Benton, KY 42025



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