

May 4, 2007

SW-MS-0712

TO: All Sherwin-Williams Automotive Branch Managers
All Sherwin-Williams Automotive Sales Representatives
All Sherwin-Williams Automotive Sales Managers

SUBJECT: Training Bulletin

Flex Additive as a “Not-Included” Operation/Material

While the use of traditional flex additives is no longer necessary in many cases, the overall concept that additional materials and labor are required to refinish flexible parts is still valid.

Many of our customers have asked about the issue of getting paid for flexible additives now that most of our premium clearcoats no longer require the use of these additives. It's important that a shop be able to successfully explain their position on this subject should it become an issue.

The attached could be used to explain to customers the position they need to consider when this issue arises in the field and helps establish a “word track” to convey the concept to insurance partners.

Automotive Training Department

Flex Additive as a “Not-Included” Operation/Material

For many years flex additive has been recognized as an additional operation and/or material necessary when refinishing flexible parts such as bumper covers. When billed as an additional line item, and deemed appropriate, reimbursement is usual and customary.

As paint technology has evolved, the need for an additional flexible additive has changed. Some paint manufacturers have minimized or eliminated the need for flex additive in the clearcoat portion of a basecoat/clearcoat system. As an example, Sherwin-Williams has eliminated the use of V6-V299 Multi-Flex in their latest clearcoat offerings. Previous versions of clearcoat still require the use of flexible additive.

It is important to note that although the use of flex additive has been eliminated, a new recommendation has emerged. Sherwin-Williams **specifically requires** the addition of urethane hardener to the basecoat portion of the system to maintain the necessary flexibility and durability of the system when refinishing flexible parts. In essence, the urethane hardener replaces the flex additive as a “Not-Included” Operation/Material.

Because of this change in technology, it may be appropriate to change the syntax or wording for this operation/material. A more appropriate choice may be, “Additional Materials Necessary to Refinish Flexible Parts.” In the end, it’s all semantics. Regardless of technology, refinishers are required to perform an additional labor operation and utilize an additional material when refinishing flexible parts, as compared with non-flexible parts. From a financial perspective, the cost of the flex additive, now built into the clearcoat, is built into the clearcoat price. This is one of the reasons clearcoats cost more today than they did several years ago.

In addition, many bumper covers are now being provided in bare (raw) plastic; that is, without a primer coating. These raw plastic parts require substantial additional preparation (cleaning) steps and additional materials, such as plastic adhesion promoters, to prepare them for refinishing. Information providers, such as Mitchell and ADP have stated that their refinish times assume “primed” parts and anything else would require additional time and/or materials to bring them up to the “primed” status. An additional refinish operation such as, “Prep and Prime Raw Cover” would be appropriate to cover such labor and material expenses.