

Powder Coated Toolboxes

Look Better & Last Longer

One of the largest manufacturers of industrial toolboxes and pickup truck and van equipment in the U.S. is enhancing its product line with a powder coated finish. Knaack Manufacturing Company of Crystal Lake, IL and Payson, UT, is giving its customers more for their money with its line of aluminum toolboxes¹ by paying special attention to the finish.

Advantages of Powder

Knaack plant manager Ken Pobuda says that finishing the aluminum boxes with powder coating “significantly enhances the appearance of the box. Aluminum will oxidize over time and, without the clearcoating, the aluminum will take on a dull, drab look in contrast to the bright look the box has when it’s new.”

The clearcoating also offers greater durability and more resistance to salt spray that can come from salt air in coastal communities or salted roads in the winter.

Both advantages of the proprietary clearcoat² are important, but Pobuda is certain that giving customers the first advantage—a better looking, longer lasting finish—means more to Knaack. The company’s primary market is contractors, plumbers, electricians and others who make their living working from pickup trucks. Enhancing the appearance of the aluminum toolboxes with a quality clearcoating translates into helping customers influence their bottom line, he said.

“Image is important,” Pobuda said. “If a contractor shows up at your door with a rusty, ratty, terrible looking pickup truck, and the truck is carrying

a dull aluminum box, would you rather do business with that contractor, or with one who presents himself as a professional?”

“When our customers buy a clearcoated box, they’re making an investment in their professional

employees live in the community,” he said, “and we raise our kids and grand kids in the community. We aren’t going to do something that we feel is not good for the natural resources in our area.”

Powder is Tough

The nature of aluminum makes clearcoating even more important from the standpoint of durability, Pobuda said. If an aluminum box is dented, which is not unusual in a heavy work environment, the powder coating continues to protect the aluminum after impact without chipping, cracking or delaminating.

Clearcoating also helps the aluminum box maintain its good appearance over time, and enables it to withstand exposure to weather. Knaack demonstrates the difference to customers by using a panel of weathered alumi-

num, half with clearcoat and half without. The difference is striking, Pobuda said, and it is an effective method to show the value of clearcoating.

Knaack uses powder coating on several hundred products in its extensive line. Shelving and ladder racks for trucks and fire extinguisher holders are powder coated. Some toolboxes that are mounted underneath larger commercial trucks receive a clearcoat finish.

The popularity and acceptance of pickup trucks as personal vehicles has created another market for Knaack products. Their toolboxes are so attractive and suitable for use by homeowners that they are in demand for personal use. They can be used for carrying golf clubs, fishing equipment, groceries or luggage. “We think our clearcoated aluminum box is the best looking box on the market,” Pobuda said. “We’ve had nothing but positive reactions.” **P&SF**



image,” Pobuda continued. “Quality and success are tied together, and we want our customers to have both.”

The diamond plated or “quilted” looking aluminum toolboxes are a new product line for Knaack. They originally produced them without the powder coated finish. “We had a great box and satisfied customers before we started clearcoating,” Pobuda said. “But our company philosophy is to give our customers the best value.” Knaack began to clearcoat aluminum boxes as a means of increasing the product’s value to customers.

The company has also known the value of a powder coating finish for the steel boxes it makes for a long time. “We’ve been powder coating our toolboxes for at least 15 years,” Pobuda said. “Powder enhances the performance and appearance of our product for our customers.”

Environmentally Friendly

Powder coating is also a process that is environmentally friendly, and that’s a serious issue for Pobuda. “Knaack

¹Weather Guard® aluminum tool boxes, Knaack Manufacturing Company

²Armor-Tuff™