

SURFACE PREPARATION AND COATING OPERATOR

- ALSO KNOWN AS:
- PAINT TECHNICIAN
 - INDUSTRIAL COATINGS APPLICATOR
 - SURFACE FINISHING SPECIALIST
 - PROTECTIVE COATINGS OPERATOR
 - POWDER COATING TECHNICIAN

WHERE PRECISION MEETS PROTECTION, AND INNOVATION WEARS A PERFECT FINISH.

This pivotal role in the manufacturing industry requires precision, technical expertise, and an eye for detail. As a Surface Preparation and Coating Operator, you'll be responsible for applying protective and decorative finishes to a wide range of products, ensuring their durability, functionality, and aesthetic appeal.

KEY SKILLS

Skills which may benefit anyone considering a job as a surface preparation and coating operator include:

- ✔ Attention to detail
- ✔ Colour matching
- ✔ Precision
- ✔ Problem solving
- ✔ Technical proficiency

CAREER PROGRESSION

In this role, you may have the opportunity to progress to other positions. Career progression opportunities include:

- Team Leader
- Quality Assurance Officer
- Aircraft Surface Finisher
- Business Manager

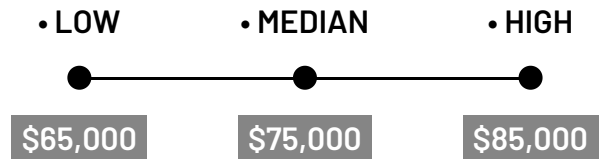
VALUES & ATTRIBUTES

Values and attributes of anyone considering a job as a surface preparation and coating operator include:

- ✔ Safety-conscious
- ✔ Adaptable
- ✔ Patience
- ✔ Quality-focused
- ✔ Team Player
- ✔ Artistic – “Creator”

SALARY EXPECTATION

The expected salary for a Surface Preparation and Coating Operator can vary across different areas of manufacturing and may vary as you become more experienced.



RELATED INDUSTRIES

- ▶ Aerospace and Defence
- ▶ Furniture and Other Products
- ▶ General Manufacturing and Engineering
- ▶ Transport Equipment and Machinery

RECOMMENDED SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- Design
- Industrial Graphics Skills
- Visual Arts in Practice

CORE SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- Essential Mathematics
- Essential English
- Visual Arts

JOB OVERVIEW

Surface Preparation and Coating Operators play a crucial role in the manufacturing industry, applying protective and decorative finishes to a wide range of products. From automotive parts to aerospace components, these skilled professionals ensure that surfaces are properly prepared and coated to meet specific requirements for appearance, durability, and performance.

Their work contributes significantly to product quality and longevity, directly impacting customer satisfaction and the reputation of their employers. In a broader sense, they contribute to the economy by enhancing the value and marketability of manufactured goods, as well as improving the sustainability of products through corrosion protection and increased lifespan.

A typical day for a Surface Preparation and Coating Operator might involve operating and maintaining various types of equipment such as sandblasters, spray guns, and powder coating systems. They must possess a keen eye for detail, a steady hand, and a thorough understanding of different coating materials and application techniques. Safety is paramount in this role, as operators often work with chemicals and potentially hazardous materials, requiring strict adherence to safety protocols and the use of personal protective equipment.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Your role may include duties as follows:

1. Prepare surfaces through sandblasting, chemical cleaning, or other methods to ensure optimal coating adhesion
2. Apply powder coatings using electrostatic spray equipment, ensuring even coverage and proper thickness
3. Operate and maintain specialised equipment such as spray booths, curing ovens, and sandblasting chambers
4. Inspect finished products for quality, consistency, and adherence to industry-specific standards and specifications
5. Mix and match colours, adjusting formulations to meet precise requirements for different applications across industries

HOW TO BECOME A SURFACE PREPARATION AND COATING OPERATOR

While formal qualifications are not always mandatory to start in this role, many employers prefer candidates with relevant training or experience. A traineeship pathway exists for this role. Here are steps you might take to become a Surface Preparation and Coating Operator:

1. Complete Year 12 or equivalent, with a focus on subjects like visual arts and industrial technology
2. You may find it useful to undertake a Certificate II in Process Manufacturing (MSM20116) while you are at school or before commencing an apprenticeship.
3. Consider apprenticeship opportunities in manufacturing or engineering firms
4. Obtain relevant licenses, such as those required for handling hazardous materials
5. Gain hands-on experience through entry-level positions or internships in manufacturing settings

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

A traineeship is the best pathway to gain employment as a surface preparation and coating operator. Depending on which part of the industry you want to work in, you can undertake the following qualifications as a traineeship:

- Certificate III in Surface Preparation & Coating Application (MSM30216)
- Certificate III in Aircraft Surface Finishing (MEA30118)
- Certificate III in Engineering – Fabrication Trade (Surface finishing) (MEM31922)

A traineeship is open to anyone over the age of 16. As a trainee you will combine work with formal training, allowing you to gain practical skills and knowledge in a specific industry while earning a salary.

Duration: Traineeships typically last between 12 to 24 months, depending on the specific program and whether you are working full-time or part-time.

Work and study combination: As a trainee you will work either full-time or part-time while receiving formal training from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Eligibility: Generally, traineeships do not require formal qualifications to enter, making them accessible to a wide range of individuals, including if you are a school leaver or someone looking to change careers.

Completion: On completion you will receive a nationally recognised qualification, showcasing your skill and experience.

Skills, qualifications, accreditations and licenses

Surface Preparation and Coating Operators may choose to pursue other training or certifications, licences and tickets. Qualifications and skills may be required to progress to supervisor or team leader positions.

Advanced qualifications for this role include:

- Certificate IV in Leadership and Management (BSB40520)
- Certificate IV in Business (BSB40120)

UNIVERSITY & HIGHER EDUCATION

While university education is not typically required for this role, it can provide advanced knowledge and open up opportunities for career progression. Relevant degree programs might include:

- Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical Engineering)
- Bachelor of Science (Chemistry)

These programs offer in-depth understanding of chemical processes, materials science, and quality control, which can be valuable for those aiming for senior technical or management positions in the coating industry. The pathway to university often involves completing a vocational qualification and gaining industry experience before pursuing higher education. Skills gained through these programs include advanced problem-solving, project management, and research capabilities, which can be applied to innovate coating technologies and processes.