



Recommendations for Handling the Plastic Bumper Color Match Challenge

Refinishers have always been faced with challenges when it comes to plastic parts. Many newer vehicles have plastic bumpers and fascia that wrap around and are flush with the metal parts of the vehicle. This presents a color match challenge for OEMs as well as the refinishers.

There are several factors that could create a perceived color match problem:

1. In the OEM paint process, plastic bumpers are usually painted separately from the main body of the vehicle - often at a different location - because plastic parts cannot withstand the high bake process that metal parts can. The different application processes and substrates (plastic vs. metal) can result in color variation - especially with spray sensitive colors (e.g., light beige metallic). Most often, the difference between the bumper and body is due to flake appearance, darker/ lighter or a combination thereof.
2. The bumper and the fender are often adjoined at slightly different angles. Light reflects differently at different angles, this can give an illusion of a different shade of color.
3. The color of the surfacer or sealer on the body of the car and the bumper are often different. If the basecoat is not applied to black and white hiding on the body, it can create differences in different lighting conditions.
4. The surfacer or sealer on the body of the car and the bumper are different. This difference can affect the surface absorption rate of the base coat color often impacting the metallic flake orientation to look differently. This can create a darker face of the color as well as a lighter side tone.

To provide the best possible color match it is recommended to blend into the main body of the vehicle.

Consumers are often unaware of the color mismatch of bumpers, until they are in need of a repair. After the repair, consumers take a closer look and see the color difference between bumper and vehicle. To avoid this problem, body shops should alert the consumer of the color match issue before the repair begins. They should show the consumer the non-repaired bumper to illustrate that a color difference already existed. This will put the customer's expectations at a reasonable level and help assure customer satisfaction.

Axalta Coating Systems offers products with approved and specified repair processes that are together designed specifically for automotive refinishing. It is critical to the quality of the repair to use the recommended products following the approved processes outlined in Axalta's Technical Data Sheets.

Please visit the Axalta Coating Systems website for full details regarding warranted systems and their related procedures. In the event there are additional questions or additional information needs, please do not hesitate to contact your local Axalta Coatings Systems representative or call us at +1-855-6-AXALTA (1-855-629-2582).