

Preparing Shelves and Moulds Using Bullseye Shelf Primer

1. Shelf Preparation

The pink tint of a newly prepared shelf indicates that it has not been fired, upon firing the pinkish dye burns out. The need to reapply depends on the temperature to which the shelf has been fired. Generally, if you have not fired over 704°C/1300°F you can reuse shelves and moulds without reapplying primer; recoat shelves after each full fuse (788°C/1450°F or higher).

Before applying shelf primer to a kiln shelf or mould, clean all old primer off the shelf or mould using a metal paint scraper. It is best to do this dry, in a well ventilated area, wearing a dust mask. In this picture, note the useful slot disposal at the back of the worktop, making this job quick and clean.



2. Mixing the Shelf Primer

Shelf primer is simple and easy to prepare. You will need 3 main items:

- Bullseye Shelf Primer.
- A small bucket with a tight fitting lid.
- Either a brush or sprayer to apply

Mix one part dry powder to 4-5 parts (by volume) water – it should look something like the consistency of single cream. Stir before each application, 400g of dry shelf primer will make approximately enough mix to coat about 25 shelves, 20" by 20", 5 coats per shelf.

Precautions - Whatever method of application is used, wearing a mask is essential to avoid inhaling the powder as it can be hazardous, we recommend wearing gloves to prevent the skin from drying out.

3. Application of Shelf Primer

With a brush - A Haik brush is the most popular type of brush to use,

Mix the primer with water as described above and stir well to avoid separation. Before brushing onto the kiln shelf or mould check that it is clean and free from dust particles.

- Ensure the brush is fully saturated and apply a thin, even coat, avoiding dragging the brush as though you were painting.



- Brush in one direction, then at a 90 degrees angle, then diagonally, applying as evenly as possible. Apply at least 4 coats.



- After application, allow the shelf primer to dry. Either naturally (approximately 1 day) or heat the kiln to about 260°C for 20 minutes. Mullite shelves can be fired up to temperature as quickly as your kiln permits, however take at least ½ an hour to bring ceramic moulds up to temperature to avoid thermal shock.
- Once the shelf primer is dry, check the item is covered with a smooth layer and you are ready to use the shelf or mould. The smoothest finish can be achieved by taking a normal piece of paper and gently rubbing the primer with the paper and the palm of your hand.

Application with a spray gun - Application with a spray can vary. If using an airbrush, follow the manufacturer's instructions. Mix the same amounts as when using a brush but take care that the mixture is not too thick. Spray the shelf or mould surface thinly and evenly (don't spray your kiln elements).

Storage - Mixed shelf primer will last many weeks if kept covered. Dilute with water if evaporation occurs.