

Painting Your Firebox (Masonry, Brick, Composite)

1. Surface preparation

You want to be sure the brick is cleaned and free of loose debris. The easiest way to clean loose debris and soot from old brick is to use a wire brush. This will loosen any stuck on deposits from crevices and pores in the brick. Vacuuming the brick and the floor of the fireplace will prevent loose dust from getting on freshly painted surfaces during application.

If you choose to use soap and water to clean the brick, you should wait at least 3 days before applying the paint. This waiting period will allow the moisture from the cleaning process to escape the brick before it is painted.

For new masonry, cement or brick you should wait a minimum of 30 days before painting the surface. This will allow the masonry to cure before painting. Prior to painting newly installed masonry you should lightly brush the surface and use a vacuum to clean up any loose material in the firebox.

2. Application

The Stove Bright High Temp Paint in the aerosol can is the easiest product to use for the best finish for this project. You should drape and tape off the area about 3 to 4 feet around the fireplace opening to protect surfaces from the aerosol paint. Note that the Stove Bright Paint is a chemical formulation that “wants to dry” quite quickly. This means that any stray spray will dry in the air in about 3 feet from the nozzle.

Shake the can thoroughly for at least 90 seconds to be sure the paint is well mixed before spraying. Before spraying the paint on the brick, spray a small quantity on a scrap piece of cardboard to be sure the mixed paint is delivered to the tip before you begin coating your brick.

Apply a very thin light coat to the brick. This first coat should be very light as to not look like what you expect the finished color to look; it should look more like a pattern of colored dots on the brick than like a coat of paint. Allow this first coat to dry for 15 minutes.

Apply a second light coat. This second coat should look much like the finish you want in terms of color and coverage. It may not be perfect. Allow the second coat to dry about 15 minutes.

Apply a third light coat to get the perfect even finish with great coverage. Inspect the finish after 15 minutes; if you think that areas need a touch-up then apply another very light coat. Allow the last coat to dry for 2 to 4 hours before doing anything with the fireplace.

Some additional hints when spraying the paint:

Spray from a distance of 12 to 15 inches. Getting too close can cause the paint to run and drip. Spraying from farther than 20 inches will cause “dry spray” which will result in a gritty finish.

After each application, shake the can for 5 seconds and then turn it upside down and spray for 3 seconds on your scrap cardboard to clear the spray tip. Before beginning the next coat, shake the can for 90 seconds and spray a small amount on the scrap cardboard to deliver the mixed paint to the tip ready for coating your brick.

A single can cover about 12 square feet if you follow these guidelines for 3 light coats. If your firebox area to be painted is greater than 12 square feet, then purchase 2 cans of paint.

3. Starting a fire

Once you have completed the 3rd coat and let it dry for 4 hours you can safely assemble any parts or add wood grates. You can start a fire any time after 4 hours. You can wait as long after 4 hours as you wish (1 day, a week, a month or even longer) before starting a fire.

For a wood burning stove follow these guidelines:

1. Wait 4 hours before igniting a fire in the stove.
2. Build a small kindling fire to start. The kindling fire should be kept burning for 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Add fuel to build a medium size fire to bring the surface temperature to about 450°.
4. The medium size fire should be kept burning for about 60 minutes.
5. For the final stage of curing, add fuel to this fire to make it a very hot fire (surface temperature above 600°F) and keep it at this level for about 60 minutes.

For a pellet burning stove follow these guidelines:

1. Wait 4 hours before igniting a fire in the stove.
2. Start the pellet stove according to the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Once lit, moderate the pellet fuel and air mix for a very low burn for 10 minutes
4. Increase the fuel and air mixture in the pellet stove to a medium level and allow to burn 60 minutes.
5. Increase the air and fuel mixture to its highest levels to burn as hot as possible for 60 minutes.

For a gas burning stove follow these guidelines:

1. Wait 4 hours before igniting a fire in the stove.
2. Start the gas stove according to the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Once lit, moderate the gas for a low burn for 10 minutes
4. Increase the gas setting to a medium level and allow to burn 60 minutes.
5. Increase the gas stove setting to its highest levels to burn as hot as possible for 60 minutes.

NOTE: During the final higher temperature burn phase there may be some visible smoke near the stove surface. There may also be an unpleasant odor. To mitigate this effect, ventilate the room with open windows and doors to provide airflow.

HEALTH WARNING: The smoke from the curing process displaces oxygen. Small children, elderly folks and persons with existing breathing problems should vacate the area during the hot burn to avoid the discomfort of lost oxygen. The smoke is primarily Carbon Dioxide, and therefore nontoxic but uncomfortable.