

Some Suggested Tools and Materials for Weathering Freight Cars

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Clear flat finish.

(Testors Dulcote, Floquil clear flat, etc.) Thinned one to one, it should be airbrushed onto all the surfaces of a model before beginning the weathering process. Also applied to cover decals (where used) and as a seal coat after weathering has been completed. You will get better results with a good airbrush instead of a spray can, which can apply too much at once and is hard to control.

Water-based acrylic weathering wash.

Dark brownish gray (for example, mix Burnt Umber, Neutral Gray, and Ivory Black) with a wetting agent added (i.e., a drop or two of liquid detergent or Kodak Photo-Flo) to prevent the wash beading up. Should be thinned with water as necessary and applied with a brush. Or you can apply "wet water" before applying pigment, to ensure all surfaces are wet. This way, pigment in different areas is easily varied. When dry, pigment in the wash collects realistically in corners and crevices and around rivet heads.

Solvent-based paints and weathering washes.

(Testor's Model Master, Floquil, etc.) These can be various shades of grays and browns and thinned as necessary with the manufacturer's thinner or with fast dry enamel reducer, available in larger quantities at auto paint supply stores. May be applied with small brushes to represent dirt or rust streaks on sides and ends and spilled material around hatches on covered hoppers and manways on tank cars. Suitably thinned, this can be airbrushed over a coat of water-based weathering wash to represent the desired degree of dirt and grime.

Artists' pencils.

Prismacolor artists' pencils in various shades of gray and brown are best. (Some other brands may work okay, but many won't, so try before you invest in a whole set.) Can be used to represent dirt and rust streaks and especially to discolor different boards on wood running boards,

wood sheathed roofs and sides, and wood flat car and gondola decks (but don't overdo it). A light gray Prismacolor pencil, kept very sharp, is ideal for applying chalk markings on car sides.

Weathering chalks.

Bragdon model railroad weathering chalks or Pan Pastel artists' chalks in black and various shades of gray and rust colors. Pan Pastel applicators and well-used paint brushes work well with these. Unlike ordinary chalk, these products have a binder which will keep them in place so airbrushing clear flat over them won't blow them off (though it will mute their color somewhat). Effectively represents rust on gondola and hopper interiors, coal and sand dust, paint and lettering streaking, oil thrown up on tank car bottom sheets, etc. Can be rubbed off to some extent if you overdo it, especially by using a water-dampened Q-tip.

Paint patches, data restenciling, and destination cards.

Most models need these, as prototype steam and transition era freight cars were required to be reweighed and restenciled at frequent intervals; see Tony Thompson's article in *Railroad Model Craftsman*, April 2011, pp. 72 and 73 (a corrected version is available at <http://modelingthespot.com/2011/03/reweigh-article-from-rmc.html>).

Restenciling was also required every year or so when truck journals were repacked and air brake equipment serviced. Also, destination cards were on almost all freight cars moving in trains, whether loaded or empty (though not on cars in yards).

Concluding remarks.

Most people find that one or two of these methods work best for *them*, but you need to discover by experimenting which ones are best for you. And never forget to consult photographs (of your period) for weathering patterns as much as you can.

- 1. Flat clear coat to keep water from BEADING UP
- 2. Do Roofs separately to provide something to hold
- 3. Wet water on all finishes.
 - Colors - Ivory Black, Neutral Gray, Burnt Umber.
- Wet first - then "dry" on colored powder when almost dry - brush out to even color, "Scrub" from "DABs"