

Significant Elements | Resource Sheet: Bathtub Refinishing

Do-it-Yourself Interior Refinishing Although a variety of acrylic epoxy and enamel product kits are available, relatively inexpensive and quick (between \$20 and \$200 for approximately 3-5 day process), we have heard that results are often disappointing and inconsistent unless used only on very small chips or flaws. Each product has a different guarantee and usually no more than a 1-year warranty. If you choose to refinish your bathtub with a kit, review the material safety data sheet to take health and safety precautions and precisely follow the product instructions.



Do-it-Yourself Exterior Refinishing The exterior of a bathtub is refinished most easily when the surface has been abraded, and then sanded to a smooth surface. The most effective method is sandblasting or mechanical sanding, taking care not to expose the bathtub's interior finish to abrasion. Sandblasting generally requires removing and transporting your tub to a sandblasting company. A heavy-duty mechanical sander may be used on-site. Manually removing paint and rust with a wire brush also works. Once the exterior is sanded and smoothed, a rust-resistant primer should be applied immediately. Finally, the tub may be painted with an enamel paint.

Patching Chips and Scrapes If you have small chips on the surface of your bathtub, these can be filled with an epoxy or fiberglass putty compound. These inexpensive filler compounds are widely available in hardware and home improvement stores and are fairly easy to use. Once the compound is dry, sand with extra-fine sandpaper and smooth the surface.

Professional Refinishing Professional refinishers etch the bathtub's interior by a mechanical or chemical process that prepares the surface for an epoxy or enamel coating. The coating is then evenly applied to the etched surface, sometimes followed by a high-temperature baking process. Professional refinishing costs substantially more than do-it-yourself kits (between \$400 and \$800), but far less than purchasing a new tub. The tub may remain on-site or be moved to the company's workshop. Refinishing the tub's interior takes approximately 3 days on-site; it may take 2 weeks or longer if sent to the company. Unlimited color options, matched to franchise paint formulas, are available. Most professional refinishers offer a warranty of 1-2 years, but suggest that the new finish will last up to 20 years. In order to maintain the new surface, the owner must refrain from using abrasive and bleach cleaners, and should occasionally wax the surface.

New Fixtures for Your Bathtub

Fixtures for your newly-refinished bathtub are available at home improvement stores and online at:

- www.signaturehardware.com
- www.decorumhardware.com
- www.restorationhardware.com
- www.vintagebathtub.com
- www.rensup.com

*Or order from Kingston Brass through
Significant Elements*

Professional Services

Professional Refinishers: Having your tub refinished professionally may be costly, but according to our customers' testimony, it provides the best results.

- Cayuga Custom Powder Coating, Trumansburg, NY (607) 277-8844 www.cayugapowdercoating.com
- Ed Shampine Bathtub Refinishing, Cicero, NY (315) 699-5565
- Larry V. Smith & Associates, Gillett, PA (570)537-6619
- PermaBrite Bathtubs Re-Bath of the Southern Tier, Endicott, NY (607) 748-9420
- Shur-Bond Division of Tub Refinishing, Clarence Center, NY (near Buffalo) (716) 741-9450

Sandblasters

- Glenside Monument Co., Ithaca, NY (607)273-4522
- Higgins Sandblasting, Lansing, NY (607) 533-7626

Do-it-Yourself Kits

- XIM Tile DOC epoxy (about \$30) and Etch-I-M (about \$20), www.ximbonder.com.
- Integrity Refinishing Coatings Do-it-Yourself Kit (about \$200),www.integritycoatings.com .
- Homax Tough As Tile epoxy paint (about \$30), www.homaxproducts.com
- Homax Porcelain Chip Fix (about \$5), www.homaxproducts.com

Safety First!

- **Lead-based paint.** Airborne lead particles that are inhaled or ingested can cause lead poisoning. Lead from paint also leaches into the surface below; use caution when sanding a stripped surface. Intact lead-based paint layers may pose a lower health risk and be painted over. Refer to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's *Lead Paint Safety: A Field Guide for Painting, Home Maintenance, and Renovation Work*; or call (800) 424-LEAD for a free copy of the guide or for more information, or visit www.hud.gov/offices/lead/index.cfm .
- **Chemical vapors.** Chemical products may cause serious health problems if inhaled or contacted. Follow product instructions carefully. Refer to the manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheet (available at www.msdsonline.com) for proper handling of chemicals. Never mix chemicals together. Wear appropriate protection, including a respirator fitted to your face with appropriate filters.
- **Asbestos particles.** Asbestos is a fibrous mineral commonly used in construction; asbestos dust can deposit in the lungs and causing pulmonary diseases and cancer. Protect yourself and your work area when handling asbestos. Proper disposal is required by law. Refer to the Environmental Protection Agency's website, www.epa.gov/asbestos/ashome.html, for more information.
- **Hazardous waste disposal.** Refer to local solid waste department disposal guidelines. Tompkins County's Household Hazardous Waste Management has a specific schedule of days for drop-off, and requires registration and a \$5 fee for a limit of 25 gallons of liquid waste and 50 lbs. of solid waste per visit. A full list of regulations is available at www.tompkins-co.org/solidwaste/main.html or by calling (607) 273-4496.
- Have proper ventilation, lighting, and access to a water source and telephone in your work area.
- Cover your work area with heavy plastic sheeting to protect surfaces and to clean up any hazardous waste.
- Wear protective clothing, gloves, safety glasses, and a respirator when working with hazardous materials.
- Seal hazardous waste containers and properly dispose of them. Wash hands and clothing after handling hazardous materials.
- Keep children and pets safely away from the project.