

Industrial Spray Painter interview questions

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What to expect

Industrial spray painting interviews combine technical knowledge, safety awareness, and practical judgement. Employers want to see that you can prepare surfaces correctly, apply coatings to specification, and work safely with spray equipment.

- **Technical knowledge:** Questions about surface preparation, coating mixing, spray equipment, and film thickness.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions about WHS, PPE, ventilation, and handling hazardous chemicals.
- **Quality control:** Questions about inspecting finishes, identifying defects, and meeting specifications.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experiences, teamwork, and problem-solving.
- **Scenario-based:** Questions that present a work-related problem and ask how you would respond.

Interviews often start with introductions and a review of your resume. Then the interviewer asks technical and safety questions. You may be asked to complete a practical test or describe your process in detail. The interview may finish with behavioural questions and an opportunity for you to ask questions.

1. Can you walk me through your process for preparing a metal surface before painting?

Why they ask

This question tests your technical knowledge of surface preparation, which is critical for coating adhesion and durability.

How to structure your answer

A step-by-step walk-through. Start with inspection, then degreasing, abrasive blasting, sanding, and masking, explaining why each step matters.

Example answer

"First, I inspect the surface for rust, scale, or old coatings. Then I degrease it to remove oils and contaminants. Next, I use abrasive blasting or sanding to create a profile that helps the paint adhere. After that, I mask off areas that shouldn't be painted. Finally, I clean the surface again to remove dust before applying primer."

2. Tell me about a time when you noticed a defect in a coating you applied. What did you do?

Why they ask

This behavioural question assesses your attention to detail and problem-solving skills.

How to structure your answer

Use the STAR method: describe the Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

Example answer

"In a previous job, I was spraying a large steel panel and noticed a run in the finish. I stopped immediately, let the coating cure, then sanded back the affected area and re-sprayed it. I also checked my spray technique and adjusted the gun distance and speed to prevent it from happening again. The final panel passed inspection without any issues."

3. How do you ensure you meet the required film thickness and finish specifications?

Why they ask

This question checks your ability to work to precise standards and use measuring tools.

How to structure your answer

Explain your method: mixing, testing viscosity, applying coats, and measuring film thickness with a gauge.

Example answer

"I start by mixing the coating to the correct viscosity using a viscosity cup. Then I apply the coating in even passes, checking the wet film thickness as I go. After it cures, I use a film thickness gauge to measure the dry film thickness. If it's not within spec, I adjust my technique or add another coat. I also visually inspect for runs, sags, or thin spots."

4. What safety precautions do you take when working with spray equipment and coatings?

Why they ask

Safety is paramount in this role, so employers want to hear that you follow WHS procedures.

How to structure your answer

List key safety measures: PPE, ventilation, equipment checks, and chemical handling.

Example answer

"I always wear the required PPE, including a respirator, gloves, and coveralls. I make sure the spray booth ventilation is working properly before I start. I check the spray equipment for leaks or damage, and I follow the safety data sheets for the coatings I use. I also keep the work area clean and free of ignition sources."

5. Imagine you are spraying a large component and you notice the spray pattern is uneven. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario question tests your judgement under pressure and your ability to troubleshoot.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure: stop, assess the problem, take corrective action, and prevent recurrence.

Example answer

"I would stop spraying immediately to avoid wasting material and creating more defects. I would check the spray gun settings, nozzle, and fluid viscosity. If the nozzle is clogged, I would clean it. If the viscosity is wrong, I would adjust it. Then I would test the pattern on a scrap piece before continuing. I would also note the issue to prevent it from happening again."

6. Describe your experience with different types of spray equipment, such as HVLP and airless.

Why they ask

This technical question assesses your versatility with equipment, which is important for different jobs.

How to structure your answer

Compare and contrast the equipment, explaining when you would use each and your proficiency.

Example answer

"I have used both HVLP and airless spray systems. HVLP is great for fine finishes and smaller jobs because it has less overspray and better transfer efficiency. Airless is better for large surfaces and thicker coatings because it applies material faster. I am comfortable setting up, operating, and

maintaining both. I can adjust pressure and nozzle size to suit the coating and the job."