



**WASH A GALVANIZED SURFACE** with plain soap or detergent and water before painting. This

removes any oil that would prevent good adhesion. Turpentine or mineral spirits work, too.

## How to Paint Galvanized Metal

**O**RINARY paint won't stick to new galvanized metal for long. If you've painted gutters or garbage cans you know that some preparation of the surface is necessary.

The old tricks of allowing galvanized metal to weather outdoors so the zinc coating will oxidize, or treating the surface with vinegar or other acids to etch it, may not be the sure cures they were once thought to be. That's the latest word from paint experts in a booklet entitled, "Painting Galvanized Steel," just published jointly by the American Iron and Steel Institute, the American Zinc Institute, and the National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association.

*Watch out for "inhibitors."* Weather-

ing is important, say these experts, but not for the reason you may think. Modern galvanized metals are treated at the factory with special inhibitor coatings designed to give temporary protection against staining during shipping and storage. Since some of these coatings may be difficult to paint over, it is desirable, where possible, to leave them exposed outdoors at least six months so they will oxidize before you attempt to cover them. If you must paint sooner, try to find out who the manufacturer is and ask him for instructions that apply to his particular chemical coating.

Prolonged weathering is actually bad because it allows the metal to rust in spots where the zinc coating has been

## Where would you use galvanized metal primers? Try these spots



**ON GALVANIZED SCREENS** to prevent rust; on copper screens to avoid staining on wood frame. Using a scrubber minimizes clogging of mesh.



**ON GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS** before you install them. You can add a top coat of regular paint later to match the color of your house.

chipped or worn away, such as around nail or screw holes. So-called short-cut methods of etching with acids can also be dangerous; the acids may eat too deeply into the zinc coating and destroy its effectiveness. Such acid washes are hard to remove and may remain to undermine the paint.

Some old-timers still favor red lead as a primer for *any* metal surface. But paint men say it's no better than an ordinary house paint on galvanized.

The only sure preventive for peeling paint, report the experts, is to put on first a primer coat made especially for galvanized metal. This provides a shield to protect the zinc against chemical action. It's the chemical action of the zinc underneath that causes ordinary paint to flake off. Once the special primer is on, you can safely cover it with any ordinary good-quality exterior paint.

**Read the label.** Primers come in many types, depending on the kind of protection they're designed to give. Some merely precondition the metal and must be followed with one or two coats of regular exterior paint. Others both condition and paint the surface in a single coat, although a second coat is advisable for long life.

One common preparation is called metallic zinc primer. This consists of an oil vehicle with a pigment of approximately 80 percent metallic zinc dust and 20 percent zinc oxide. The contents are stated



**ON REFUSE CANS** to double their life. You can make them more sightly, too, with just a primer coat. Or add a top coat of house paint.

on the can's label. This kind usually comes in a neutral gray and requires a top coat of regular paint for coloring. Other primers are available in up to half a dozen colors to match the house.

If you must get by on a one-coat job, choose an oil-base portland-cement paint or similar preparation made for the purpose. Your best guarantee of getting the right paint is to be sure the label reads: "For use on galvanized steel."

Before applying a primer, wash a galvanized surface thoroughly with mineral spirits or soap and water to remove any grease or oil. Loosen caked dirt or scale with a wire brush. Allow the surface to dry completely before starting to paint.